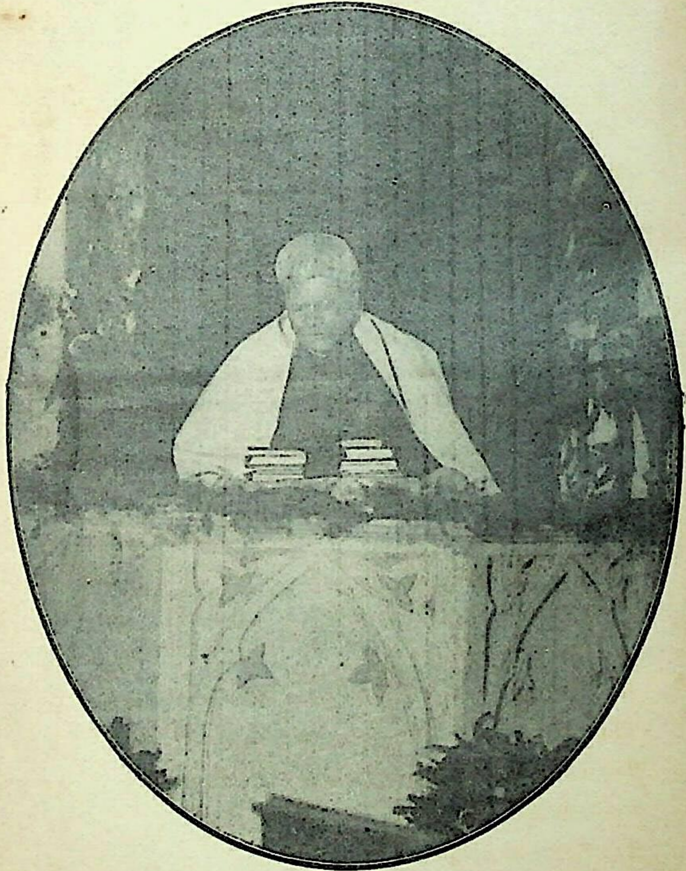
"A MODERN SAINT"



PROMOTHO LOLL SEN

Born 17th Dec. 1866 Ordained 26th Jan. 1906

Ascension 30th June, 1930

CONTENTS

PAGE

God Consciousness 1
The Only Way 5
The Church Catholic 9
The Creation of Creators 14
The Advent of Navavidhan 19
Rammohun Roy and Herbert Spencer . . . 32
The Frankenstein of a Stereotyped Creed . . 38
The Law of Active Participation 43
Symbols and Symbolism 47
The Scope of Symbolism 51
Humanism—Ancient and Modern 55

Additions in Second Edition

PAGE

World Consciousness 64
The Unity of God 69
Unity of Man 74
Two Sermons 79
The Challenge of the Navavidhan 83
Paragraph Pulpit 93
Work and Ideal of Navavidhan 99
Preparatory Exercises for Maghotsav 1931 . . 102
Promotho Loll Lectures 110
The Faith that Endures 113
To an American Friend on her Bereavement . . 115
The Gravest Danger 119
Deep Experiences and Simple Discipline in the Navavidhan 122
Science and Religion 125
Mellow our Hearts 129
A Modern Saint 133

Fragments in exposition of Navavidhan

GOD CONSCIOUSNESS*

Gathered as we are on the Himalays the seat of the Rishis where they obtained Brahma Vidya and Brahma Jnan, through incessant toil, it is meet we should be here busy to-day in the same way. But it would seem as if that stream of light that illumined the ancients had ceased in modern times. Can we attain unto God-consciousness? Yes, is the decided answer: Men do in every age rise to the vision of God.

Taking the natural history point of view and interpreting comparative religious philosophy in the light of Navavidhan, we find three stages in the attainment of this God-consciousness. The first is that of the beginner or of the child. This is the stage of *information (sabda)* where we are told about God and told that he is Omniscient, Omnipotent, or All-merciful. It is all so much information we receive about

---

* The substance of Dr. B. C. Ghosh's address on God-consciousness in the Himalayan Brahma Mandir—from the World and the New Dispensation of May 27, 1915.

God. But there comes the second stage as we grow older and reason dawns in us. We learn to question the truth of what we heard or of what we find in the Scriptures. Then it is that we come to the stage of *inference (anuman)*. We argue that because there is design in this Universe there must be a designer. All the cosmological teleological and ontological proofs of God are merely inferential. And the inferential knowledge of God does not lead us to know God direct. It gives only a thought or thoughts of God. As the thought of love is quite different from love itself, so is the thought of God other than God Himself. Taking again another example, the case of idolatry, idols are only thoughts of God, thoughts about God and not God Himself. They only tell us about God and no real worship is possible in idolatry. Indeed psychologically examined idol-worship is an impossibility and can scarcely be said to exist. Spirit can worship only spirit.

But in our perseverance to find God if we keep up in our earnestness and endeavours, we slowly pass beyond the inferential stage to that of *intuition*. We turn inward and there find God face to face. We talk to him and He talks to us. This is the third stage—the stage of direct vision *pratyaksha*. God-consciousness therefore is not a conception of God but a perception.

The Gita tells us that the revelation of God is three-fold—*adhiatmik, adhidaivik, adhibhoutik*. In the third stage we first see Him within—as a revelation within the soul. This is *adhi-atmik*.

But after we have seen God within we find Him in all nature around us. Had my mother died before I came to know her, her picture would be an unknown figure to me; but the same picture would make me recognise her, if I had known her already; so God is there in Nature, but we do not see Him till we know Him within. Cognition within leads to recognition without. The revelation of God in external nature follows on an inner revelation. Nay the distinction between inner and outer is lost and we see that the Being that is in the sun is the same as I find in me. This is *adhi-daivik* But the *adhi-bhoutik* the realisation of God in all beings is the most difficult of all. Easy it is to see Him in hill and dale, sun and moon, seas and ocean, but to recognise Him as the *Bhagaban* living in every man and woman around us is the height of spiritual *Sadhan*. Thus there are three phases again in this last stage of direct God-consciousness.

We can understand direct God-consciousness better perhaps if we begin a little lower in the scale. Let us see what is meant by Self-consciousness. It is a discovery of unity between myself and the rest of the world. I find myself a part of the world. From this we rise to Home-consciousness. In National-consciousness again I see that not only my family but every one in my nation is bound up with me, that my good is theirs and their good is mine. In State-consciousness we see that the State is not of the Government alone or of the peoples but is a unity of the Government and the people. If to-day there had been a world Consciousness in

Europe the present war would be impossible. But it is only a Buddha or a Jesus that possesses it. Keshub said that God-consciousness includes world-consciousness, that God is not alone in Heaven—not even merely with the elect, but with all Humanity, all sinners and saints together. God is not an abstract entity nor is He a solitary deity but One Who cannot live without His children. Keshub addressed God as Mother and in the vision of the Great-mother the God of Navavidhan stands revealed with all Humanity in Her arms.

But accepting God-consciousness and denying the men and women of the world we find we lose the vision. So it comes that with the unfolding of God-consciousness, we embrace within one Soul's compass the life of the world. Men of Supreme God-consciousness were those who lived in the thick of the world. That is why all great men directed their disciples not to books or universities but urged them to lead a simple, good life. With this leading of the good-life comes the unfolding of God-consciousness, the vision of a perfect personality that cannot exist without other personalities, the vision of the whole world living in the arms of God.

THE ONLY WAY*

"Salvation through the Navavidhan and Navavidhan alone"—a touch of arrogance, a note of blasphemy seems to ring in these words quoted from the Call to the Convention (Navavidhan Sangha 1914). Brahmo friends read in it a mimicry of orthodox Christians or bigoted Moslems. Friendly critics expostulate with us about this 'relapse' into the "Chosen people" doctrine. To those however who have read or listened to the expositions of the New Dispensation during the last ten years, the claim should not strike either as arrogant or blasphemous. If any readers will consult Keshub's sermon on *Navavidhane Paritran* (Salvation in the New Dispensation) published last November by the Brotherhood for free distribution, they will find in it an admirable exposition in the simplest language and in the most convincing manner of the Salvation in Navavidhan and yet a salvation which is consistent with the claims for Salvation made by Christians or Hindus or Moslems. Meanwhile I would refer my readers to a quotation from an article in the *Christian Life* of London contributed by me in January 1905:—

"Nay, I shall not be doing justice to his (Keshub's) persecutors and critics if I do not point out here that even his admirers and eulogists fail to grasp the significance of this doctrine of Progressive Revelation. There are many mansions in our Father's abode in heaven, and it is said that according to Keshub Chunder Sen there must be many entrances thereto. Such statements seem to me to misrepresent Keshub's teaching. The logical deduction should be that the apparent diversity of routes is an illusion. The march upwards to Zion is a long spiral defile where travellers at various stages appear to walk in different and even opposite directions. To an observer near the summit the illusion disappears, and the happy throng is revealed pursuing the same path and making a continuous ascent to the beautiful city of God. The ordinary eclecticism of the Brahmo Somaj would lead to the inference that a Hindu can obtain salvation if he remains a Hindu. The New Dispensation would say and does say that a Hindu must become a Mahomedan and a Christian as well, if he is to be saved. The Trinitarian must become a Unitarian and Unitarian must accept Trinitarianism before either can hope to reach the goal."

---

* Reprinted with corrections from the World and the New Dispensation, April 9, 1914.

Is not then the Salvation of the New Dispensation unique? Is it not the only Salvation? Is it not also a recognition of the claim of each religion to being necessary for salvation? When a Christian comes and asserts that there is no Salvation without Christianity, the man of the New Dispensation says 'Amen'. When a Moslem comes and asserts that there is no Salvation without Islam, the man of the New Faith says 'Shukr-e-Khuda'—Thanks be to God!

When a Hindu comes forward to say that there is no salvation without the Vedas and the Gita the man of the Navavidhan agrees and says 'Be it so.' To him not one of them is deceived or deceitful. To him none is making a false claim. It is only when one rejects the other, disregards the claims of the other, that he has to remind them all that their claims can all be retained in the Synthetic claim of the New Dispensation, which recognises and teaches that all the established religions of the world are necessary to Salvation. The 'chosen people' doctrine is not false. In the Navavidhan only, we see the truth of the doctrine, namely, that every people on this earth is chosen for some special revelation vouchsafed unto her in the Harmony and Synthesis of all religions and in the merging of all paths into one—even the way of Salvation of the Navavidhan.

If a Brahmo believe that his is the only true religion—while other religions are only partly true and partly false, that his religion alone contains all the truths common to all religions—he can consistently with such belief, claim salvation for Brahmos alone and must repudiate the claims of every other religion. He cannot consistently say that there are many paths to salvation. In fact the many gates to the many mansions theory is not a consistent doctrine at all. And it is strange that Keshub, the most rationalistic of all Indians of modern times, should be held—and by his own admirers too!—to have taught such a doctrine. There are many mansions in our Father's abode in heaven because all human souls are to be accomodated there. But there is only one gate and one path. The glory of the Gospel of the Navavidhan consists in this that it brings to us the revelation of the Only Way—*the way of harmony and synthesis*—the way that is made up of the ways of all other religions. The eclectic Brahmo has to repudiate the claims of other religions and strive to *replace* all other Churches by his own. His Catholicity is destructive, outward and extensive. The man of the New Dispensation recognises the claims of all religions and knows that he himself will not find salvation till he actively assimilates the religion of the world, till he actively participates in all truths of God. His catholicity is conservative and comprehensive and is both internal and external. To the man of the Navavidhan the claim of every religion to Salvation is valid—and valid not to the exclusion of all others but in the harmony and synthesis of all. And this is the only salvation which is also the Salvation in and through and of the New Dispensation.

THE CHURCH CATHOLIC*

I—Its meaning

There are two senses in which the world "Catholic" can be used. In the first, which is also its usually accepted meaning, a Catholic or universal church is one which has its own dogma, creed, rituals and church organisations and which strives *to replace* every other church in the world. It believes that it alone is the repository of all truth and wisdom and holds that all men *can* and *should* enter its fold which ultimately would become coterminous with the whole human race. This is the sense in which the word is used for instance in the names Roman Catholic church and Greek Catholic church. This is also the sense in which our contemporary of "The Indian Messenger" explained the word "universal" as applied to Brahmoism when in 1905, the 'national' character of Brahmoism was impeached at the Benares Conference. The word 'Catholic' is used in such cases in *material extension*. The other sense in which the word 'Catholic' and its synonymn 'universal' can be used may be described as their meaning in *Spiritual Comprehension*. In this case the Church Catholic does not seek *to exclude* every other church, much less replace any one of them. Its only dogma is the fact of universal inspiration and an *inclusive and progressive* revelation to all mankind. Its creed is the Science of God. Its gospel is the Love of God. Its heaven is the Life in God. Such is the "Invisible church universal" of Keshub Chunder Sen.

---

*Reprint from the World and the New Dispensation April 9, 1914.

*

II—Its Faith and Principles

The Church Catholic holds:

Firstly, that Religion is *Faith in a Living God* and that the several religions of the world are only the varying interpretations of the phrase 'Living God' according to the light that is in the various peoples on this earth.

That such interpretations are diverse and fragmentary and not mutually exclusive but conciliable and supplementary.

Secondly, that schools of philosophy should not supplant but supplement one another for they are endeavours to understand the several aspects of that Reality which Theology calls God.

That Theology is that school of Philosophy which accepts the Reality as a Personality. That the theologies of the various religions of the world are only *varying conceptions*—of this Personality and as such are not necessarily antagonistic.

Thirdly, that the doctrines of various religions are centered round their respective *theologies*—their respective conceptions of God. That the discipline of every religion (on its practical side) is also associated with, if not based on this its distinctive doctrine of God.

Fourthly, that, therefore, it is possible to combine philosophy and theology, to reconcile theology to theology, to harmonise religion with religion.

Fifthly, that, therefore, the Religion of the present and the future is to be a harmony of all the religions of the world. Its Theology should be an assimilation of all the theologies of the world. Its Philosophy should be an integration of all the philosophies of the world.

Lastly, that, therefore, this church can reject no doctrine, despise no church and neglect no discipline; but welcomes every religion, worships in every church and works with every manner of righteousness and love.

*

III—Its Importance to Us

The recent discussion about the Brahmo Somaj of India arose from a confusion of the two meanings of the word 'Universal'. A friendly writer complaining that I identify the Church of the New Dispensation with the Brahmo Somaj of India, says that "to his mind the Church of the New Dispensation is not the visible organisation by whichever name we care to call it. If what the Minister said about the Church of the New Dispensation be true, it must include all those who, (irrespective of space or time, and whether they belong to the Christian, Mahomedan, Hindu or Brahmo faith, and whether they are living or dead) conform to certain ideals which stands for the

New Dispensation; all those are members of that *invisible* church. No doubt our constant endeavour should be to realise in our life and in our community those ideals which have been presented to us as the New Dispensation. Therefore in that ideal sense, there is a Church of the New Dispensation. On the other hand, we are of small faith and while striving after ideals, must have some organisation to attain our ends. That organisation cannot afford, to my mind, to be open only to the very few who *really* realise the New Dispensation, but ought to be open to all who want to work towards the attainment of that object but we are not yet fully identified with the New Dispensation.'

Now when we take the Church of the New Dispensation in *its spiritual comprehension,* our friend is perfectly right. In this sense the Church of the New Dispensation is 'invisible' and cannot be identified with any organisation whatsoever. But at the same time, it is necessary that there should be an organisation of all those who are striving towards such spiritual comprehension. Such an organisation can be also legitimately called the Church of the New Dispensation but it will imply the Church *in its material extension* The reverend Editor of the "Unity and Minister" and his friends have taken this meaning and so have strenously opposed the resurrection of the name "Brahmo Somaj of India." The debate and the discussion of last year therefore have been at cross purposes. We must also realise that such an agitation over the names could only take place in our Somaj.

For it is only amongst us that this distinction in the two meanings of the word 'Church' exists. Everywhere else a church striving to be universal or Catholic aims at material extension only by absorbing the members of the other churches but excluding their teachings and their discipline. The New Dispensation has come to demand of us material extension as well as spiritual comprehension. Many in the West belong to the "invisible church of the New Dispensation"—the truly Catholic Church. But they have not yet formed any organisation or society which could be called for instance the Western Church of the New Dispensation in the other sense. If we bear in mind the ambiguity of the word 'church' in this connection, there will be no need to engage in a controversy such as was witnessed in the last two years. For the sake of historic continuity, let the organisation of the church in India be called the Brahmo Somaj of India. But let us not forget that the ideal is greater than the constitution, that Life is more than organisation and that spiritual comprehension far more important than material extension.

THE CREATION OF CREATORS*

(A sermon on the occasion of the Bhadrotsav 1916)

The traditions of this pulpit make it imperative on this festive occasion to state the ideal of the New Church in new terms and establish the claim of congregational worship from the new standpoint. Old ideas are to be interpreted in the new way and old theories are to be accepted in the new light. Taking the doctrine of Creation, we note that man has tried to understand the creative act in the analogy of human industry and behind all these analogies the spiritual fact stands out, the spiritual experience that cannot be questioned, *the feeling of dependence on God.* The creation and the creature are partially or entirely dependent on the Creator. If we take the Transformation theory—the 'Potter and the Pot' explanation—we see that the material out of which the world was made cannot be accounted for and does not satisfy the demand of our soul for dependence on God. The Emanation theory—the 'sparks from a fire' explanation—emphasises the original dependence but establishes a subsequent independence. Yet the analogy of existing externally and away from God—as a spark must do—fails to meet the demands of our reason. The Creation theory proper—creation of something out of nothing—the 'artist' theory—comes nearer to our ideas of dependence and yet if we closely examine the nature of the material world we find that a creation of such a world has no meaning. First of all the idea of Matter, as Lotze and others have pointed out, is very obscure. Matter is not given to sense-perception. No one has ever seen or heard or touched atoms and molecules and vortices and electrons. Further, Matter does not persist through changes. It is spirit alone that does, and in our own selves we have an immediate experience of such a reality. Space again is a creation of our mind. The notes of a harmony can exist together and yet be not in a space, and may be our relation in space can be understood better as *similarity and approximation of nature.* If we consider Force it may be noticed that according to Science force is neither material nor spiritual, yet we are obliged to say that *force* in so far as it is volitional—*is* spiritual. Material forces express an *inner* nature of things—which may well be spiritual. 'Physical activities' are really an inadequate way of understanding and expressing spiritual activities. It is hardly necessary to point out that the whole trend of physics to-day is to accept that the ultimate portions of matter are really centres of activity and nothing more. To this if we add our first point that *things* cannot be substances—for a substance has the faculty of 'being for-itself'—we must conclude that spirits alone are substances and that the Reality is spiritual. What we call the material world, then, is the activity of a spirit—of God—His *Lila:* His dealings with other spirits. *Creation is of Spirits alone.* It is the production of spirits who can think and act on their own account.

---

* Reprint from the World and the New Dispensation of Sept. 21, 1916.

If we consider also the meaning of anything *being real* to us—it will be seen that a reality is something that is given to us finite beings in our perception. Becoming real therefore means raising *in us a perception.* From this point of view the reality of the world lies in God making His thoughts rise in us. God's thoughts, God's activities are always real—as real as He is. 'Making real,' therefore, can have only one meaning—viz.,—*communicating* to a spirit or world of spirits. What we call the material world—*Prakriti*—Nature—is this communication of God's thoughts, of God's love, of God's Holiness to a Kingdom of spirits. Creation is not a historical act—for there is no history of Gods' life—no *growth* of God's being. Creation is not in time at all—but perpetual—a perpetual communication of God's Thoughts, God's Love and God's Holiness, Creation of the material world is an act of God's will, rather, the perpetual activity of God's will.

If we are to use the word creation we can only use it in connection with the world of spirits. The Reality is not a material world—but a world of Spirits—a kingdom of God: a city of God:—such as the prophet's voice and the poet's verse bore witness to in all climes. Now spirits are creators and this is consistent with the old idea of creation—*continued dependence yet partial relative independence.* In creating spirits

God has made them creators, has made them *centres of origination*—origination of thought, of love, of will. In short they are centres of origination of spiritual activities. The grandeur of the act of Divine Creation consists then in the *creation of creators*. We are creators because we can think on our own account: we are creators because we can love on our own account: we are creators because we can act on our own account. Thought—real thought—is original. Love to be love must be spontaneous and implies not submission—but surrender. Morality and righteousness implies freedom to choose —readiness and willingness to act *not* in the line of least but in that of greatesi resistance. And yet the creators have a destiny—in as much as they are relatively dependent—the destiny that we call *Moksha*—the destiny that we are to think as God thinks: that we are to love as God loves: that we are to will as God wills.

Yet this destiny is individual: common from one point of view: peculiar and specific from another. The study of the nature of *individuality* can be traced back to ancient times: and as a result of such study two facts stand out clear to-day to the world of thought. The *first* is that the individual is not a mere segmented object of sense. The *second* is that the individual is *unique* or as it has been said—that the individual is not merely *a this* but *such a this* that its place can be taken by *no other*. We understand this when we think of love: for love individuates. Hence the individual has been defined as 'an object of exclusive interest' and the individual will carries out this 'exclusive interest' and fulfils a peculiar and specific purpose. The observation of Hume and other sensationists that our mind--empirical mind—is nothing but a collection—a heap of ideas and mental states —is a justifiable but a superficial one. Let us only have a purpose and an ideal and all this collection of states acquires a sequence, an order, an arrangement which moves towards a unity—or shall we say, reveals an underlying unity of place and purpose—in short an organic unity. Our first purposes—our early ideals may not be realised—may not be successful—may not be noble. Yet the very fact of a purpose, of a plan, of an ideal is a move towards the realisation of this unity. We may give up the first purpose—but we must replace it by another. We may give up one ideal for another, still so long as we do have an ideal to strive for—a purpose to realise we grow in individuality. The largest of all purposes is the purpose of God in one's life. The greatest of all ideals is the realisation of God's will in one's life. In fulfilling the largest purpose and the greatest ideal we are therefore not giving up our individuality—but gaining and winning more of it. God has a purpose of His own for each one's life. Each one of us has to fulfil an exclusive interest in God's life and thus on the larger view God's will is an organic unity of finite wills.

THE ADVENT OF NAVAVIDHAN*

The preparations in the history of the Brahmo Somaj for the advent of the Navavidhan can not fail in its interests to students of religious history. These preparations can be interpreted in a rationalistic way or from a spiritual standpoint. The New Dispensation is eminently spiritual and lays all its emphasis on the spiritual. For the physical is lesser than the spiritual and cannot comprehend it; the spiritual on the other hand is greater than the physical and therefore can not only explain itself but the physical as well. The spiritual alone can explain the rational. So far as history is not a mere chronicle of facts and events in some rational way, history is profane so long as it presents its facts and figures in terms of the movements of any idea however great. The evolution of the human mind, the development of a specific civilisation, the growth of a nationality, the spread of a faith, the birth of a personality are some of the great ideas that give a character to history commendable and acceptable from the rationalistic standpoint. Yet all these ideas fail in their illumination just because the spiritual—the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the march of History is left out, for theirs is but a reflected light. The Dispensation of the Holy Spirit can only be understood through the leadings of the Spirit. The advent of the Navavidhan, has a history which is nothing if it is not sacred.* The life of a people and the life of an individual are alike under the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit. Only, the consciousness of such leadings comes to us very occasionally and often late in life. To a few souls here and there the gift of this consciousness comes early and remains constant transfiguring their natures and lives. The nature of the Holy Spirit indeed finds a spontaneous expression in their nature and their lives that whoso runneth may read. The nature of the Holy Spirit shines in their countenance and fills the world around them with its radiance.

---

* Reprint from the World and the New Dispensation of July 17, 1919.

Unconscious though we are, every now and then we follow the promptings of the Spirit and recognise it perhaps as only the better part of our nature. Bents, tendencies, dispositions, temparaments, complexes—call them what we will—they are our unconscious responses to the spirit whenever these lead us to goodness and holiness,—to truth, love and righteousness. Unheeded the leadings do not cease but other tendencies and other dispositions arise in response to the promptings of self and satan, and struggle with the former responses. The conflict between dispositions, the strife between tendencies marks this stage of unconsciousness or subconsciousness and makes our conduct a mystery and a riddle to ourselves and to our neighbours. Heeded or unheeded the leadings of the spirit are there and gradually establish themselves in the lives of those that become conscious. Analysed further in accordance with the observations of Individual Psychology, these leadings appear to acquire intensity and predominance in special directions. We may call them severally the leadings of the attributes *(swarupas)* of God. The predominating activity in the life of one individual may be the mercy of God, that in another of the wisdom of God, that in a third of the holiness of God. We seem to vary in our susceptibilities to the different *Swarupas* (attributes) of God and that also at different stages of our life. And as soon as consciousness comes, the consciousness that we are being led by the Spirit, we begin to respond *alike to all the attributes* of God. It is proper to remind ourselves that the attributes of God are God himself; that each attribute implies all the rest and that the activity of one brings in its train the activities of the rest.

---

* Compare Keshub—"ব্রাহ্মসমাজ ঈশ্বরের লীলা, আর সকলি ভ্রম।"—*Brahmo Somaj Iswarer leela, ar sakali bhrom*—Brahmo Somaj is the *leela* (activity) of God, any other view is erroneous.

Raja Rammohun Roy spent his life in search of truth. The Spirit of the True took possession of him in his youth and led him on till he established the worship of the True in this land. His Hindu nature, his Moslem schooling and his English self-education all are marked by an incessant striving for the truth. His life was one long quest of the Real. Popular Hinduism, unorthodox Islam and missionary Christianity—all failed at first to satisfy his longing for the truth. Yet this failure did not stay him because the Spirit was leading him on. In attainment of the knowledge of God, in the unfolding of our God-consciousness we can easily recognise three stages. (1) In the first stage God is a rumour. In childhood, we hear of him. We read of him in our boyhood, and all religion, to us, then, is a *tradition*. All scriptures and literatures are a part of that tradition. (2) In the second stage with the growth of our reason and the unfolding of our mind God comes to us as an *inference,* as a philosophy. Reason is not satisfied with a hearsay and a report. The intellect demands grounds for an ethical belief and rises to the thought of God on the stepping-stone of arguments,—cosmological, teleological, ontological. Reasons are produced in support of tradition, and tradition in support of reason. (3) After inference comes the third stage of *intuition,* of God-vision, of God-consciousness proper. A direct knowledge of God, perceptual, not inferential, leads now to a wonderful illumination. The world, the soul, all things within and without are transformed and transfigured. The soul is filled with God, Nature with His activity and history with His dealings. And a marvellous thing happens. All hearsay, all report, all rumour of God is perceived to be *the utterancc of God Himself.* It was God who spoke with hundred tongues in my childhood. It was Heaven's own language shining through the pages of the scriptures. Men and women who surrounded me in childhood and youth, the language and literature of the people among whom I grew up, the arts and sciences of the world that ministered unto me—all were so many witnesses through whom God communicated with me and led me on towards the fulness of God-consciousness. Arrived there one does also realise that the movement of thought and reason in the *stage of inference* was also urged and guided, unconscious though he be, by the spirit of God Himself. All speculation, all philosophy, all inferential knowledge of God are due, verily, to stimulations of God Himself.

In the life of Rammohun we find clear illustrations of these stages in the unfolding of God-consciousness. In his *Tuhfat-ul-Muahiddin* (Gift to Montheists) written in Persian and published about the year 1804 when he was 32 years age, the Raja himself made the distinction between *the religion of habit and custom* and *the religion of natural tendencies*; the former based on scriptures and tradition and dogmas of cunning founders, the latter obtained by the natural play of human reason and human faculties. The Raja of course prefers the latter to the former. And his main thesis seems to be that all the established religions of the world were partly false and partly true: false in so far as they were scriptural and traditional—cunning inventions of deceivers; true as far as they owed their origin to the common reason of man. The test of the 'natural' was with him its universality; the test of the traditional was its local character. The application of this test reduced the natural religion to a very simple creed,—the belief in the soul and the world and their Maker, the belief in a future life of rewards and punishments. With regard to tradition *(tawatur)* the Raja indeed was ready to accept "a report admissible to reason," but most traditions he described as "discrepant reports contrary to reason." The position of the Raja, at this stage, was distinctly deistic and dualistic. Ten years later on settling down in Calcutta we find that the Raja was engaged in controversies over Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, and in each case he accepted passages from scriptures admissible to reason and cited passages only in support of reason. The study of the scriptures, however, gradually worked a change in his attitude. The Vedanta as taught specially by the school of Sankara, led him to monism and in particular to *a-cosmism.* Yet we cannot say that he gave up entirely his belief in the reality of the world for all the time he was enthusiastic in social and political reforms. Instead of leaving the world and taking up the life of a *sannyasi* or entering upon a monastic life he set himself assiduously to make the world round him full of justice, love and righteousness. In other words he proceeded to make the world real. We can say, therefore, that he harmonised a-cosmism and dualism, and from this synthesis arose the Raja's Theism. Reverence for these scriptures, respect for the prophets and the practice of prayerfulness steadily made their appearance as he approached the age of 50. Messages of scriptures, arguments of reason found less and less emphasis after 1825. His heart longed for *atmasakshatkara,*—direct vision of the Spirit. He emphasised the practice of divine worship, wrote on the *Gayatri*, frequented a Unitarian place of worship. and eventually established the *Brahma Sabha* for the worship of One True God. His reverence for the scriptures increased, reason was supplemented by revelation, and in his erstwhile impartially hostile attitude towards all faiths one can now discern a partiality for all religions.

Led by the spirit of truth he advanced step by step through *atmasakshatkara,*—to the direct knowledge of God, to the recognition of scriptures, traditions, and philosophies of all peoples, and to the acceptance of divine worship as the one practice or *sadhan* for the true knowledge of God—the practice in which all could and should unite. Thus the foundation of the Brahmo Somaj was not in a social compact or a political need but in Divine Worship. Thus the purpose of the Brahmo Somaj was not primarily social reform nor educational advancement nor political reconstruction. Its one primary purpose was and is Divine Worship and that comprehends all! The Spirit of Truth guided Rammohun to the establishment of the *Brahma Sabha* in 1830. That was the inception of the Navavidhan,—its birth came fifty years later!*

Upadhyaya Gour Govinda gave a very good illustration of the leadings by a Spirit-attribute *(Swarup)*. A generation ago social life in

---

* Compare Keshub—"তখন বিধান হইল, আজ আমরা তাহাকে বিধান বলিতেছি।"—*Takhan bidhan hoila, aj amora tahakey Vidhan bolitechhi.*—The dispensation was made *then*! today we are calling it so.

Bengal was enriched by the manifold service of one of its great sons the late Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. His charity and his kind heart were well-known. He could not help being philanthropic. Wherever there was any adversity, and suffering, his heart went out to the sufferer. Many a time his beneficiaries proved ungrateful, turned against him and made very ill use of his assistance. He would lose patience with them, punish them, and yet a second time, and third time extend his charity to them. He did not know why he did so. Here is a plain case of an unconscious response to the mercy of God. The mercifulness of God, the compassion of God, held sway over Vidyasagar's soul, and yet he was not aware of it. Had he become conscious of the Divine leading he would have gone about doing good more like a Buddha or a Jesus and never felt the impatience and the irritation he did. The Upadhyaya also points out that the failings of people who are great in some walk of life or other are due to this unconsciousness. The genius of the artist, the enthusiasm of the worker (*sevak*), the ecstacy of the saint become a source of trial and temptation, if the consciousness of the leading of God does not waken in the soul.

The birth of this consciousness removes, as we have said before an exclusive response to any one Attribute (*swarup*). The spiritually conscious life comes to be a synthetic response, and receives the blessing of an increasingly adequate realisation of the relation of life as well as of the relations of the attributes of God.

Love to be true must be holy and righteousness and holiness are always loving. Knowledge, when it becomes wisdom shows elements of love and righteousness, and power in its truest and richest sense, has wisdom, love and righteousness, joy and peace, trust and beauty and all the wealth of the spiritual world. When Rammohun steeped intellectually in the a-cosmism of Sankara, proceeded to make the world a *cosmos* i.e., full of justice, full of truth, full of love, we have evidence here (in this contradictory behaviour) of the synthetic leading of the Spirit. While the Raja avowed his allegiance to the school of Sankara he accepted God as the "Author and Preserver (*Jagater karon o nirbaharkarta*) of the universe." Thus while he accepted the a-cosmism of Sankara he did not give up his deism of earlier belief. The Vedanta taught him that God was inscrutable *in His nature* but known only in His Being as the unknown cause and maintenance of the world. For this reason he rejected worship as propitiation but accepted and practised worship as "scriptural and rational contemplation," or as "the recapitulation of the knowledge about the Divine Being" and to this end, to him all scriptures were useful, and all meditation on the good in the world as coming from God was imperative. The recitation of phrases or *mantras* like *Om Tatsat* (the source-and-stay-and-end That is real) and *Ekamevadwitiyam Brahma* (the One, All prevading, Permanent and Unique), and meditation thereon constituted, according to the Raja, an abbreviated worship. Still he called such contemplation indirect (*paroksha*) and formal (*parampara upasana*) i.e., not spontaneous, and looked forward to *atmasakshatkara* (direct vision of the Spirit, a greeting of the Spirit) as something above intellectual worship. This direct vision does not come, according to the Raja, till by culture and discipline the perception of the physical world disappears and the Being of God is manifested. When the Greeting comes at last Brahma alone remains real, all else become unreal. Brahma thus is transcendent. By worship or adoration the Raja meant, writinging 1817, the following:—

> "The elevation of the mind to the conviction of the existence of the Omnipresent Deity, as testified by His wise and wonderful works, and continual contemplation of His power as so displayed, together with a constant sense of the gratitude which we naturally owe Him for our existence, sensation and comfort..........."

Twelve years later in 1829 he describes worship as "a contemplation of His attributes."—God's existence to be *concluded* from His wise and wonderful works, and contemplation to be confined to His power and His benediction alone. This worship based on an inferential knowledge of God was not far from the worship of the "silent sort" advocated by Huxley and Spencer. The vague consciousness of the existence of an Eternal Energy from which all things proceed familiar to students of Spencer was thus anticipated 50 years before the appearance of Spencer's *synthetis philosophy.* In 1829 when describing the manner of the right kind of worship—defined as the contemplation of God's attributes—we are told that as "without the help of sound we can conceive no idea, therefore by means of the texts treating of the Supreme Being, we should contemplate Him." Worship is thus to be conducted by comparing our idea of God "with the sacred writings and with reason." With regard to the unknowable nature of God the following quotation will give the Raja's view clearly:—

> "Where it is written that He is imperceptible and undefinable, it is meant, that His likeness cannot be conceived; and where it is said that He is capable of being known, His mere existence is referred to, that is, that there is a God, as the indescribable creation and government of this universe clearly demonstrate: in the same manner, as by the action of body we ascertain the existence of a spirit therein called the sentient soul, but the form or likeness of the spirit which pervades every limb and guides the body, we know not."

The *Brahma Sabha* was inaugurated on August 20, 1828. Pundit Ram Ch. Sarma preached the inaugural sermon and laid emphasis on the "direct worship" of God. Its superior excellence was attested by Revelation, by reason and experience. While indirect worshippers quarrel with each other's partial views of God, the direct worshipper quarrels with none, for he adores One God Whom they also under imperfect and differing forms actually adore. In other words, as we would now say,—the worship of natural objects, images, and persons was a worship not of God, but of our *thoughts of God,* of our conception of God. The sermon was endorsed by Rammohun and showed distinctly that the object of the *Brahma Sabha* was the spiritual worship of God. The Order of Service adopted however consisted only of the reading of Scriptures, (the Vedas, Tantras etc.) their expositions in Bengali, a discourse in Bengali and hymns in Sanskrit and Bengali. So that there was no *Aradhana* no *Dhyanu* and no prayers, individual or congregational. A *stotra* (psalm of praise) from the *Mahanirvana Tantra* (*Namaste sate sarvalokasrayaya* etc....) was included in the service. In private devotions however, meditation and contemplation were recognised. Through the discipline of contemplation the impermanence and unreality of the sensible world was to be realised and this would prepare for *atmasakshatkara* or direct vision of God. The contemplation was to be assisted by meditations on suitable passages from Scriptures. It was pointed out that this discipline required time and great patience. When the world vanishes as unreal the presence of the Spirit shines forth giving us the occasion for a higher worship. In the matter of this discipline Rammohun followed Sankaracharyya, but there is one great difference between them. Sankara allowed idol-worship, from the standpoint of his monism, as symbols of the Spirit. But the Raja did not tolerate idol-worship in *any* form and from any motive. He was strong and firm in his attitude towards idolatry, and he would not insist on his a-cosmic *advaitabad* (monism) on any one who had not realised the need of *atmasakshatkara*. The advocates of image worship contended that some material forms in worship were required by immature minds. But the Raja insisted that even uncultured minds could worship God in the Spirit and stood in no need of symbol or image. Every one in fact was capable of "direct" worship. Yet in *recognising* a higher worship with *atmasakshatkara* the Raja virtually admits that the so-called direct worship, private and congregational, was the preparatory discipline for unadvanced minds. The conclusion, therefore, is not unlawful that a higher worship and an order of service suitable thereto, with *Arati, Aradhana, Dhyan and Prarthana* (prayer) was foreshadowed in that recognition. *The sacred history of the Brahmo Somaj is the history of the evolution of worship.*

RAMMOHUN ROY

AND

HERBERT SPENCER

The attitude of Raja Rammohun Roy towards other religions requires consideration. His opposition to idolatry drew him near to Mahomedanism and Christianity, yet the peculiar, distinctive tenets of those religions did not find much sympathy from his rational nature. In the *Tuhfat* (1804) he confesses that he studied various religions with impartiality; and that the conclusion he could reach was that no religion was entirely false or entirely true, that all religions were partly true and partly false. That is to say, in so far as they contained rational truths and were based upon the natural religiousness of men they were true, and so far as they contained local and peculiar characteristics handed down in scriptural tradition, they were false. It is the common elements, therefore, of all religions that constituted truth and went to form the Raja's "Universal Religion." The Raja had come across the rival claims put forward by Islam, Christianity and Hinduism as being the only true religion, and so in the *Tuhfat* he takes pains to point out that each one of these religions contained falsehood.

It is interesting to compare the Rajah's attitude with that of Herbert Spencer in 1860 insisting on the search for the soul of truth in things erroneous and indicating the way of finding it thus: --

> This way is to compare all opinions of the same genus; to set aside as more or less discrediting one another those *special* and *concrete* elements in which such opinions disagree; to observe what remains after these have been eliminated; and to find for the remaining constituent that expression which holds true throughout its various disguises. (First Principles).

When we proceed to apply this method to our own ideas and to those of our opponents it is pointed out that

> We shall be led to suspect that our convictions are not wholly right, and that the adverse convictions are not wholly wrong.

Spencer next welcomes an increasing catholicity of feeling and points out how to preserve an impartial attitude in dealing with chronic antagonisms of belief.

> In proportion as we love truth more and victory less we shall become anxious to know what it is which leads our opponents to think as they do. we shall begin to suspect that the pertinacity of belief exhibited by them must result from a perception of something we have not perceived, and we shall aim to supplement the portion of truth we have found with the portion found by them. Making a rational estimate of human authority . . . . . we shall lean to the more defensible position that none are completely right and none are completely wrong.

We thus see that the position of the Raja in early life coincided very much with the Spencerian position half a century later. Both are eclectic—both are ready to accept truth wherever found. Both think it proper to keep an impartial attitude towards all opinions. Both argue that religious ideas and beliefs that are universal or almost universal must have a common foundation in fact. Their vitality and their persistence and their independent evolution among different peoples show that their source must be deep-seated,—in the rational nature of man, according to the Raja; in human experiences, slowly accumulated and organised according to Spencer. The local, the peculiar, the special ideas in different faiths, on the other hand, were more or less priestly inventions which have to be discredited and eliminated. According to the Raja they form the tradition, and the Raja would like them entirely removed. Herbert, Spencer is a little more charitable and suspected that even a belief that is proved to be grossly at variance with fact had something in it, and that this something was its correspondence with certain human experiences. In other words beliefs however erroneous had some basis in human experience, that is to say, they were erroneous interpretations of and conclusions from actual facts.

The proposition that all religious beliefs may be true, special or universal, is never mentioned by Spencer; the Raja mentions it as an impossible and a greatly perplexing alternative. He mentions indeed the argument that "discrepancy in precepts of different religions does not prove falsehood of any religion," but he refutes this type of *yugadharma* doctrine because its supporters argued the supercession of the old by the substitution of the new. The Raja could not accept this *yugadharma* (religion suited to the age) because the rule or government of the true God bore no analogy to the government of men which proceeds in defective wisdom on a principle of trial by error. In fact he concludes that contradictory precepts were not consistent with the wisdom and mercy of the great, generous disinterested Creator, but were really the fabrications of the followers of the religions.

We have just mentioned that both Spencer and the Raja accepted the principle that the universality of certain religious beliefs was in favour of the presumption of their truth. Yet it should be pointed out here that, with the Raja, mere universality was not enough, for he distinctly says:—

> That the truth of a saying does not depend upon the multiplicity of the sayers, and the non reliability of a narration cannot arise simply out of the paucity of the number of the narrators.

The universal, in other words, has to be rational as well,—the irrational cannot be accepted by the Raja. From the standpoint of Spencer. however, universality is enough; the irrationality is due to the defective interpretation of a fact or experience. From the standpoint of the Raja the rational and not the traditional is universal. According to Spencer the universal even if irrational must have some ground or other, however concealed, for rational acceptance. This slight difference in attitude is easily understood when we remember that Spencer was engaged in the reconciliation of Religion with Science, while the Raja's main concern was the reconciliation of different religious faiths. Both of them, however, adopted, what we may call, the G. C. M. method of abstraction and failed to perceive the need of a synthetic method that takes into account and finds a place for all the special and concrete elements in a diversity of beliefs—a method taught emphatically by Keshub Chunder Sen.

Writing in 1823, however, the Raja makes an explicit statement about the relation between *tradition* and *reason* :—

> "When we look to the traditions of ancient nations, we often find them at variance with each other ; and when, discouraged by this circumstance, we appeal to reason as a surer guide, we soon find how incompetent it is, *alone*, to conduct us to the object of our pursuit. We often find that, instead of facilitating our endeavours or clearing up our perplexities, it only serves to generate a universal doubt, incompatible with principles on which our comfort and happiness mainly depend."

He then concludes that the best method is not to rely exclusively on either but to make "a proper use of the lights furnished by both"—and thus finds a place for *revelation* by the side of *reason*. And this position was the result no doubt of a diligent study and research of the Hindu Scriptures which, he was firmly convinced taught the unity of God and enjoined the rational worship of God.

Persuaded of the value of the Hindu Scriptures, he came presently to appreciate the Christian Scriptures as well, and finding that the teachings of Christ were subordinated to the dogmas of the churches, himself prepared for the use of his countrymen. "The Precepts of

Jesus." In the introduction to that compilation the Raja expresses his opinion (1820) that a belief in God prevailed generally, being derived from tradition and from an attentive survey of the works of Nature, but that the Golden Rule—do unto others as you would be done by—though partially taught in every system of religion, was principally inculcated by Christianity and constituted the "essential characteristic of the Christian religion." In all subsequent writings the Raja dwelt upon these two principles as the essentials of religion and as he expressed later that Hindu thought excelled in its notions and affirmations of the unity of God, we can conclude that he was impelled, however unconsciously, to find a place for Christianity by the side of Hinduism and prepare the ground for a synthesis of these systems, which was to play such an important part in the subsequent history of the Brahmo Somaj.

This article appeared in the W. & N. D. of July 31, 1919 as the third in the series entitled "*The Advent of Navavidhan.*"

THE FRANKENSTEIN OF A STEREOTYPED CREED*

Creed-bound and man bound is Mahomedanism, declared Pandit Shivanath Shastri in his History of the Brahmo Somaj and warned us of the Navavidhan, that the New Dispensation was also tending to a stereotyped creed like Mahomedanism. Now a casual reference to the article on Islam in the Encyclopaedia Britannica will show us that uniformity of practice and uniformity of interpretation which all creeds want to secure but always fail to do so, were hardly to be found even in the first century of the Prophet's era. Sufism and in our days Babism and its development Bahaism are sufficient evidence that Mahomedanism from its very beginnings did not tend to become a stereotyped creed however much individual leaders in the movement might have tried to keep it so.

The dogmas and doctrines which form a creed are not and were never inventions of priests and other designing peoples. They are confessions of faith which bind people together and have their basis on Experience—genuine spiritual experience. They are *interpretations of such experience* and it is the law of interpretations—that experience must interpret experience. The meaning that people see in a creed depends on the spiritual experience they have earned. The truth in us reveals always the truth outside us whether in Nature or Prophets or Scriptures or History or Creeds. And while we have not made our own the experience that is behind a Creed we have only an inadequate interpretation thereof but never a false one. Adequate interpretation comes only when such experience has become ours.

---

* Reprint from the "World and the New Dispensation of June 25, 1914.

Looking at the question from another standpoint we must say that Revelations are never out of relation to the thought we already have. If they were, we could never understand them or even discern them and they would cease to be revelations. It is also on this ground that we are asked to take things on faith and we are promised that the knowledge will be added in the fulness of time. Taking things on faith does not mean blind acceptance but a provisional allegiance in the full trust that with the right experience will come the right, because adequate, understanding and interpretation. Now as *faith* does not mean an idle belief but *a striving eagerness to know and to love and to follow* : faith worth the name being always a living faith and a loving faith also—true faith is the condition for right experience and therefore for right knowledge and for increasingly adequate interpretation.

Now supposing an eclectic start on the assumption that whatever he does not understand now—even after a great and enthusiastic effort of reason—he cannot and should not accept; all creeds will become unacceptable to him and he will proceed to take as much of each as he can accept and thus the inevitable result will be that he will end by taking the minimum from each. He will strike an L. C. M. of the common truths in all, for his present experience will discern only the same experience in all and thus he will be left with an irreducible minimum. He will be tempted also to call such a common element as the *Universal* in all particular religions. And this is exactly what Pandit Shastri tells us to do in his "Mission of the Brahmo Somaj." And this abstract universal is no doubt what he means by 'natural' theism and 'pure' theism on which he lays such stress in his History.

Further the parts rejected willl have to be either denounced outright as false or gently let down and removed as non-essential, as local and peculiar and temporary. As if any truth could be non-essential: as if truths were conditioned by Time, Space and Circumstance: as if some truths are to be accepted and others not. This is what rationalism leads us to everywhere and "Brahmos and other rationalists," to quote Pandit Sitanath, once they reach the irreducible minimum, miscalled, 'universal' settle down with a creed which is "stereotyped" indeed.

Let us next consider the other procedure—that of a man who starts with the assumption that creeds or parts of a creed which he does not understand are still truths to be realised and accepted. He will argue that truths that are common to the creeds and agree with his experience—are already his: they have not to be taken anew. They are corroboration of the testimony that is already his and so give him joy. They are a proof that he is one with other souls in such experience and his heart fills with thankfulness and sympathy—aye, the joy and thankfulness of communion. His heart now longs for more truths, for newer experience and the larger joy of communion with humanity. His soul is a mighty absorbent and absorbs all truths 'universal' and 'local', 'essential and 'non-essential.' He starts with faith and gains experience and knowledge is added unto it. He discovers further that there is a law about the absorption of truth. It is the *law of synthesis*. As truth must harmonise with truth, so he is never disheartened. He knows all apparent falsehoods will be seen later on to be truths perfectly consistent and harmonious with what he already has. And he is glad when he is told that many creeds are stereotyped—for the hard fossils must have preserved the truths of ages and the Science of Harmony and Synthesis has trained him to construct forms, living forms—not merely forms that once lived—out of them. "Fossils and 'stereotyped creeds' have no terrors for him. Indeed his Science has discovered for him the great law of synthesis operating in the history of religions and he knows that where-ever there has been religion—active living religion—there have absorption and synthesis taken place and wherever there is religion today there the same process must be going on. By reason of the law not only do interpretations grow but the creeds themselves grow and have grown in the history of the world. And he knows that even the stereotyped irreducible minimum of the rationalistic eclectic grows and is growing in spite of the vaunted rationalism and the satisfying universalism and the bottled Trust-deeds of a rigid constitution.

To a Navavidhani therefore a creed tends to the stereotype in so far as it does not harmonise and synthesise. Now it is the central teaching of the ultra-Brahmic Navavidhan—a teaching whose "catholicity and all-comprehensive universalism." Pandit Shastri admires and yet finds it difficult to accept, that we cannot and should not keep ourselves away from the creeds of the world; that it is our duty to accept them one by one by Synthesis; that ours is the creed that is to be built up of all the existing creeds, of the world nay even of all the creeds to come.

The Navavidhani therefore is safe and secure—so far as he is a Navavidhani—that is to say ultra-Brahmic Keshub-centric Navavidhani. His creed can never be stereotyped—if any creed can at all be—in this world of Dispensations.—*Simla, 20th June 1914.*

THE LAW OF ACTIVE PARTICIPATION *

In response to the call from the chair I shall submit only one thought in which I have been brought up and one experience in which I am growing. When we are face to face with other religions and begin to think of our relations to them—we are all led to believe that our own religion is true and all other religions are false. We also look forward to the day when all other religions will be swept away from the face of the earth and our own system will be firmly established and everywhere accepted. This dogmatic attitude is not altogether reprehensible—for that which I accept as truth I must hold on to, against the whole world. However, as we begin to love truth more and victory less, we realise that there is truth in other religions also and that one must revise his opinion about other religions. There are many ways in which people have sought and worked this revision. But the true and satisfactory solution comes when we rise to a higher thought that *all the established religions of the world are true*. This new perception gives us a fresh meaning of the phrase "Universal Religion." The older, the earlier meaning is that only one religion is to be accepted ultimately all over the world. But the new meaning we read is that *every religion is for me and for you and for all*. Christianity is not for the the Christian alone—but for the Hindu and the Moslem as well; Hinduism is not for the Hindu alone but for the Christian and the Moslem also; and Islam is not for the Arab or the Moslem alone but is for the Christian and the Hindu and all the world. This new faith brings with it the perception that I have no right to ask you to take my religion till I have accepted yours.

---

* A Speech delivered by Dr. B. C. Ghosh, at the Parliament of Religions, 28th January, 1929, held in the Senate Hall, Calcutta University.

A further acknowledgment goes with the realisation that God in His great mercy has sent all these religions—all these dispensations for *me* —for the salvation of a sinner like *me*. The claim of every religion then appeals to me. When the Christian comes to me and says that there is no salvation without Christianity—I say "*amen* brother." When the Hindu says there is no *mukti* without Hinduism—I say, "Be, it so brother." When the Moslem makes a similar claim for Islam, I admit it and look forward to the day when I shall be accounted one of the faithful.

Again, a deeper insight is given us when we go on with our *Sadhan* (spiritual exercise) in this way. It is the insight that mere *passive toleration* in the religious world is not enough, nor even a more *active sympathy*,—but that a deep obligation there is on every one of us to share each other's experiences of the spiritual life. It is the discernment and the discovery—the revelation—that a *law of active participation* obtains in the spiritual world,—just as the law of gravitation holds in the material world. We all know what happens to us if we disregard the law of gravitation—what will happen to me if I jump off the roof of this building denying the law of gravitation. In the religious world also the refusal to recognise the *law of participation*, refusal to accept others' religions, leads to crusades and *Jehads*, to inquisitions and communal riots.

The law of active participation is actually operating in the world. The Evolution of religions and the evolution of positive religions have been determined by this law. More than thirty years ago when I first went to England I came across several pious men and women—all devout souls—who were much disturbed—their minds much perturbed by the *Higher Criticism* of Christianity from Germany. They had a great dread that if Christian doctrine and Christian dogma and Christian rites and rituals could be traced to Babylon or Egypt, Christianity would be dethroned as a revelation. When this apprehension was put to me, I had to say that such a relation with the ancient world rather meant a great glorification for Christianity. I would gladly accept the view that Christianity was the great repository of all God's truths that He had sent to the ancient world. It is a glorious thought that Christianity as a great synthesis has preserved for us all the religions of the Mediterranean world.

Turning to our own land we note that Modern Hinduism has been called a conglomeration of religions. It indeed is much more than a conglomeration—it is a great and grand synthesis. All the religions of the past sent down to our great land by the all-merciful Father have been preserved in our Hinduism. And I feel thankful that the professor of theology of the University of Tokio is pointing out today that the Buddhism of the Gangetic valley has displaced none of the indigenous religions of the far East—but has worked them up into great and marvellous syntheses.

We learn thus from history that the course of religious evolution and progress in every land has proceeded under the guidance of the *Law of active participation.* The unity of races and the concord of nations shall only be brought about by the unfolding of our spiritual life and *active participation* is the law of spiritual life—whether individual or collective.

If the Hindu retaining his Hinduism, retaining his Gita and the Upanishads, accepts Christianity and the Bible as well as Islam and the Koran; if the Christian keeping to his Christianity accepts Hinduism and the Hindu Scriptures; if the Moslem without giving up his own faith and the Koran takes up Hinduism and Christianity and their scriptures—will not they automatically as it were find themselves on the same spiritual platform? Is not this the only solution of our sectarian and religious and all other differences?

SYMBOLS AND SYMBOLISM

The world *Symbol* means *putting together*. What are these that we put together? The articles or signs that we use for symbol, represent something that is either absent to sense perception or cannot be so perceived. Material objects are used as symbols for immaterial imperceptible facts and experiences. Language written and language spoken are both symbols of thoughts and experiences in our minds.

Fifteen years ago, during a trip to a wild country in the interior of Tehri Garhwal, in the Himalayas, the writer came across many objects and objects with signs on them placed along the tracks that meant nothing to him but conveyed very valuable information to the illiterate *dandi*-bearers and dwellers of the mountain villages. Slabs of stone, mounds, trees, hill sides, many of them painted with vermilion or scratched with chalk or lime or even coal, told them, for instance, the ways to the neighbouring villages, indicated to them the caves where fire was kept burning or pointed to them the path to the nearest stream. There were symbols also to mark the grave of some holy men or the spot where a holy *Sadhu* used to sit and carry on his devotions. And the traveller was struck with the veneration with which the symbols and signs were treated and the care with which they were tended and kept up. When asked about their anxiety to leave the fire burning in the cave, or to dust and cleanse the stone slab, (the *lingam* which meant 'the indicator' merely and not 'sex') the reply was invariably that it was the *dharam*—the duty, the religion—if we choose to translate it so. That journey across the first two ranges of the Himalayas, was a great lesson not merely in biology but in anthropology and sociology. It was a demonstration—quite convincing—of the origin of *linga puja*—sign "worship" or symbol "worship"—in general and of *Siva lingam* "worship" in particular. For did not Siva live in the Himalayas? Did he not carry his great *tapasya*—his profound meditations and communions—on the mountains and did not the ash-dusted wild men of the hills (the *bhutas* and *pretas*) wait on him and serve him and slave for him? What could he ride on but a bull on those mountain tracks? Whenever his disciples went—in the hills or in the plains would they not carry with them some enduring memento picked up from his *asram*—his hermitage something perhaps used or even touched by him? What other enduring memento could be had but slabs, cones and pebbles large and small to remind and recall all that was glorious in the hill hermitage of Siva the great benefactor? Would not the holy cone or the pebble be preserved and taken care of to remind one of the mountainside, or the hill stream or the cool zephyr that blew over the heights in mid-summer? Would not the children and the children's children want to be told of those mysterious regions above the clouds—the *Kailas* (the cælus – the heavens) where the venerated *rishis* and gods lived?

Symbols and indicators thus become transformed into holy objects and in course of time temples and *maths* rise over them—to express the mind of the worshippers and yet to conceal a great deal perhaps of the purpose and thought and experience of their original users and inventors.

In Symbols, then, we put together something conceived with something perceived. By symbols perceived by his senses, man desires to express that which is not perceived or can not be perceived by the senses. In Symbols we mix the senses with super-sense—the *indriyagochar* with the *ateendriya*. Symbolism is the practice of expressing the supersensuous in terms of the sensuous.

Symbols are perceptual vehicles of our thought-life, of our conceptual life. They originated before language spoken and written arose. Language itself is a great symbol, a series of symbols—elaborated and systematised in such a way that its symbolic nature is not often realised. Symbols other than language existed in the pre-language period. And as Jung points out *symbolism is the language of dreams.* In dreams, conceptual realities take form and shape and appear as perceptual or sensuous realities. Ferocity takes the shape of a ferocious animal; cunning takes the form of a cunning animal; love takes the form of the mother or parent or lover or friend or child; patriotism appears in the figure of a national hero: loyalty in the person of the sovereign.

It is a habit of human life to take objects of sense and to use them as vehicles of conceptual realities. A flower is an offering of pleasure and reverence. A flag is a token of banded determination, of trials and triumphs. A crescent or a cross stands for an ideal that has been lived and valued, for which men did strive and men did die. And now in the new synthetic symbol of the Navavidhan not only do we find the expression of an ideal that comprehends all ideals; but we are given the assurance that Spiritual life insists on the acceptance and the active participation in the spiritual life of all sects and all communions. It bears undoubted witness in fact to the deep solidarity of the race both in its earthly and its spiritual existence.

THE SCOPE OF SYMBOLISM*

The origin and function of symbolism lie, as indicated in previous pages, in the distinction between the material and the conceptual and in the necessity of representing the spiritual in terms of the material for the purpose of communication to other minds. In fact symbols are a kind of language just as *cries* and *gestures* are and it will be legitimate to regard gestures as the most primitive symbols as well as the earliest symbols of infancy. Dancing, singing, acting, rites, ceremonies, worship are all parts of a great scheme of symbolism. They all stand for facts and experiences of our thought-life that have to be made known to our fellow beings. Silent worship in solitude by the individual, need not require forms or symbols or even language. But worship which serves as a demonstration or in which others participate, has perforce to use ordinary language or symbolic language and to observe certain order and form. Material objects and perceptual actions and movements—postures, gestures, bending of the knee in supplication, standing up in reverence, prostration in utter self humiliation—are utilised to give expression to thoughts and attitudes of mind.

Spiritual experiences and mental attitudes are often too deep for expression in language—for utterance in words. So words are mingled with tune and set to music to remove the limits of concepts expressed in words and the music is supplemented by dancing to convey the inner attitude, to express the emotions that heave and surge within, too complex and too dynamic for mere speech. Yet speech does not remain content to lag behind but grows and does its utmost to overtake song and dance in efficacy of expression. Speech and song, dance and music are all in the service of the spirit and in their development, by their flexibility and intensity of appeal outgrow the importance of most symbols. But in this world there are many tongues; speech and song have thus their limitation. To communicate with people of other tongues therefore symbols are required that would transcend the limits of particular languages. The cross and the crescent, the trident and the lotus express thoughts and experiences, beliefs and faiths, outlook on life and world in language that is international, in speech that transcends speech.

---

* Reprinted from the *Navavidhan* of August 7th and 14th, 1930, pp. 8, 9.

There are then symbols of various orders but they all translate the spiritual into the material. And so long as the spiritual has to be expressed by the material, symbols must arise and must have certain efficacy. *This efficacy suffers as soon as the spiritual behind the material fails to be apprehended.* The emotions and thoughts that were or should have attached to the spiritual in the background, come to be detached and cling on to the mere material in the symbol. It is this psychological fact—a great mental disaster indeed—that sets so many minds against symbols and symbolism. But there is no escape from symbolism while we have to distinguish the spiritual and the material and, while in some sort of way, the material asserts its primacy on our thinking. This primacy is the homage that the conceptual seems to pay to the perceptual. My thought about things is somehow inferior to the things themselves: My mother is more precious than my thought about my mother—than even a likeness or a photograph of my mother. The evidence of sense has a superiority to the abstractions and imaginations of thought. But it is forgotten that *symbols are concepts converted into percepts*. They are thought translated into form and shape. Their efficacy depends upon the concepts that shine forth from the objects of sense utilised. Still they show that in some way the perceptual is preferred to the mere conceptual.

Symbolism Transcended

Escape from this dilemma is indicated by the fundamental changes required in our outlook. Naive realism and naive dualism have to be overcome. The distinction between the perceptual and the conceptual has to be removed by the spiritual. The sensuous and the supersensuous have to be realised as essentially one. This has been done in our land by the practice of *Yoga*. The object of yoga is to see the One Reality in the sensuous (or perceptual) as well as in the supersensuous (or conceptual). The *sadhan* of yoga leads to the vision where thoughts are one with things. In other words *yoga spiritualises the senses*—sees in the sensuous the actual activity—and not merely a representation of the spiritual. In particular, this *sadhan* may be called Objective Yoga.

The method of this yoga may begin in the universalising of symbols, in recognising in the first place, that dynamic symbols, ever growing and ever enlarging in scope become ever worthier as symbols. And as this realisation deepens it dawns upon one *that every object and every event in the material world is a symbol*—is an expression or a manifestation of a *spiritual activity*. In fact the blessing of a great revelation is sent unto one—that the world—the world of senses, the material world is a wonderful manifestation of the Spirit and a still more wonderful *activity* of that Spirit in as much as it is a perennial and persistent communication of the Love, the Wisdom and the Righteousness of God.

Symbolism is thus transcended in Yoga. When the universe stands forth as a great symbol of the spiritual, when the world of matter is seen to be only an activity of Spirit, the distinction between matter and spirit, between earth and heaven dissolves. The need for symbols ceases. The spirit shines in all its effulgence and the darkness of matter is put away.

HUMANISM—ANCIENT AND MODERN*

Personal reports and current literature from the west, point to a wave of Humanism passing over Europe and America both inside the churches and outside them. This emphasis on the human factor in religion as against the Divine is disconcerting to many and is causing apprehensions among pious and devout people A slight influence of the wave has reached even our shores, for young students returning from abroad unmistakably show such influence on their thought.

Yet humanism was not unknown in India either in the remote or in the near past. Jainism is a humanistic religion which still persists in its character more or less even now. And if ever there was humanism born upon this earth as a religious culture and in its purest state, it was in Budhism of this land of Magadha or Behar. Four hundred years ago in these parts when Mithila and Nadia were the extremes of ancient Bengal a Bengali poet sang:—

শুনরে মানুষ ভাই সবার চেয়ে মানুষ সত্য
তার বড় নাই।

Shoona re manoosh bhai; Sobar cheye manoosh satya, Tar baro nai. O Listen brother man; Man is more real than every being: There is none greater than Man!

---

* Based on Addresses at Bhagalpur, C. M. S. School Hall, March 2, 1931; Cooch Behar, April 18. 1930 and Dehra Dun, October 21, 1930.—*Navavidhan, 12th & 19th March, 1931.*

In the West also. Comte's Positivism was humanism and the various Ethical Societies that grew towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century in England and America, under the leavening influence of an agnosticism fostered by the growth of the positive sciences, professed and profess today a humanism that shows a synthesis of Christianity and Budhism. Indeed the view is quite justified that humanism has existed in every land and in every age—only, in a religious society, sometimes humanism has received greater emphasis and at others, Divinism has triumphed. While in one district of medieval Bengal, a poet was singing of Humanism, in another, the great Chaitanya carried every thing before him in a revival of devout Divinism. And if we are to refer to England at the end of the nineteenth century Divinistic revivals took place pari passu with humanistic movements. Indeed one can go further and say that many of the doctrines in the great established religions of the world are a compromise or a reconciliation between Divinism and Humanism. The Absolutism of the philosophers has reacted to generate the belief in *Incarnations* and *gurus*. Both the doctrines of *Avatarvad* and *guruvad* seem to arise as reconciliations of divinism and humanism. A distant Deity comes down upon the earth—in some cases only once; in others as many as ten and if need be on more occassions than ten. The *guru* though not an incarnation, is an inspired authority who alone can guide the disciple in the path of salvation and his inspiration alone is derived from the Deity. Poet Rabindranath has said that he alone is truly a king who can make others kings. In other words he alone is free who can make others free; who can give freedom to all. It can be likewise said that he alone is a *guru* (a teacher) who can make others into *gurus* or teachers. In accepting Incarnations and *gurus* we accept the Divine in the human and reconcile divinism and humanism in our religion. The doctrines of Mediator, Saviour, Rasool are also such reconciliations found all the world over.

In fact neither of these elements have escaped from recognition in any religion. Over emphasis of one leads to the emergence of the other, to the increasing influence of the other. If Budhism started with Humanism, with the cultivation of the spiritual in man with an attitude of agnosticism with regard to the *Brahma*, the Absolute of the Upanishads and an attitude of patronage over the deities of popular Hinduism, Budhism soon grew into a worship of Budha and the divinism of its professors assserted itself specially in Further India, Tibet and China. Budha himself was more a mystic than an agnostic and his *dharma* while it suffered a change into divinism succeeded in infusing, or rather, bringing out the humanism in Vedic and Vedantic Hinduism. If Jesus Christ taught Divinism, the early Christian church in accepting him as the Incarnation moved on to Humanism and the Roman Catholic church in its devotions and prayers to Saints, slided still more into humanism. If Sree Krishna taught Divinism. Vaishnavas slided into humanism. If Sree Chaitanya going into raptures over *Hari*, knew nothing but divinism, his disciples very soon slided into the complementary attitude of humanism.

Islam with its rigorous Divinism, was not long in making the Rasool, Hazrat Mahomed, into a unique personality with a unique position in the world's scheme of salvation. And the condition of Moslems in India specially in Bengal, under the influence of Budhism and Vaishnavism is highly interesting. Indeed thirty years ago, Moslem friends and fellow students in England coming from Turkey, Egypt, Arabia and Persia, used to say that if the Hindus of India were *but parast* (idol-worshippers) the Moslems of India were *pir-parast* (*pir* or saint worshippers) and could hardly be described as *Allah-parast* (Allah-worshippers)!

On the other hand, the criticism of Huxley on Comtism may be mentioned. Huxley used to say that the saints' calendar days observed by the comtists were taken over from Catholicism and the Humanity (with a capital H) worshipped by comtists was no other than Christ the Son of God worshipped by the orthodox Christian church. Thus even positivists hardly escaped a modicum of divinism.

Regarded from this point of view, the history of every religion seems to point to the need of both Divinism and Humanism. Revivals, reforms and religious mass-movements are unconscious efforts at restoring the balance between the two factors necessary to the unfolding of our spiritual lives. There is a deep need of communion with Divinity as well as with the divine in humanity. Communion with God (or

Yoga) leads to communion with saints and to communion with humanity. Jesus in the last supper felt the need of the communion with his disciples and taught them in the blessed eucharist to seek communion with him. This communion with humanity is a *Sadhan,* a culture, a discipline that is required to complete communion with God. *Sadhu Samagam* (Pilgrimage to Saints) as Keshub Chunder Sen described it, is a *Sadhan* that is complementary to *Yoga* or Communion with God.

Humanism and Navavidhan

In the lecture Humanism—Ancient and Modern last week it was pointed out that humanism and divinism were alike necessary to religion and that historically neither was neglected or could be neglected in the established positive religions of the world. It was also indicated that the basis of Divinism was the spiritual need for Communion with God, while the basis of Humanism was the need for communion with humanity. *Yoga* or Communion with God is a discipline to prepare us for the realisation and enjoyment of spiritual unity with God while for the communion with humanity. Keshub Chunder Sen introduced a *Sadhan* or culture which he called *Sadhu Samagam* or Pilgrimage to the Saints. This pilgrimage or communion is to prepare us for that larger communion with humanity for the whole spirit world. For this *Sadhan,* however, the other *Sadhan, Yoga* was necessary. And for *Yoga,* which may be called in the language of Huxley, "worship of the silent sort," ordinary individual and congregational worship were both necessary.

Cultivation of the Navavidhan has also given us this insight that the so called worship of Jesus or Siva, or Krishna, or Rama or Seeta or Parvati is nothing but the practise of this *Sadhu Samagam* or communion with Saints. And as such, this so-called worship is an "ignorant" worship and is not worship in the strict sense and therefore need not alarm a true worshipper of God. True worship—"worship in spirit and in truth"—can be of the Infinite Spirit, of Brahma, of God alone. The Geeta emphasised this spiritual fact in a compelling way when the great teacher there said that all true worship however directed or performed reaches God Himself. Navavidhan in its true universality and all inclusiveness, accepting and confirming the teaching of Jesus Christ and Sree Krishna has given us a great assurance that the *pooja* or worship of incarnations and heroes of human society is only by figure of speech or by imitation a worship and therefore need not give us cause for alarm. Not only can such a function be tolerated and encouraged but can be even participated, by a Navavidhani if he has realised its true character and value as a *Sadhan* of *Sadhu Samagam*. Navavidhan has also told us a primary fact of spiritual experience that *no one goeth to the brother but by the Father*—that it is God alone who can lead us to the saints. If the Indwelling God does not urge the understanding and perception of the *Sadhak* and if the *Nara-Hari, Narayan* the God-in-Man does not reveal

Himself in the soul of the saint or of brother-man, the *Sadhak* cannot succeed in his communion with humanity. In knowing God first, we can know His creatures, His world and even ourselves. Communion with God therefore is the indispensable preliminary to communion with Saints or with humanity. *Sadhu Samagam* by itself in isolation from *Yoga*, is fruitless culture and senseless *Sadhan*.

Relevant to this discussion of true worship, is that other assurance that Navavidhan has brought us—namely, that *idol-worship* is no worship at all. It is merely respect and veneration paid to *a concept*—a man's conception of God. *An idol is a thought*—a thought about God. It is man's thought of God but no God. Such thought may be expressed in symbols that we call words and propositions, or in pictorial symbols that we call idols and images. The worship of thought is a misnomer, however that thought is expressed. And yet behind that thought is an experience; underneath the conception there is a perception which deserves our regard and homage and acceptance. Again, the full meaning of the conception is not understood and therefore not accepted by us till the underlying perception becomes ours also: consequently images and idols can only be fully interpreted and understood when we earn the spiritual experience similar to that on which they were originally based. It was no falsehood when a devotee of old declared that he saw God revealed in his dreams; for it is in dreams that concepts are changed into and expressed in percepts. Images and idols are experiences of the soul expressed in the language of dreams. Idolatry thus is no worship at all. It is not a worship of a person nor of the Supreme Personality and is therefore according to both Jesus and Sree Krishna, not a worship "in spirit and in truth." A true worshipper has therefore no fear or dread of sliding into idolatry. In the spirit of Navavidhan we appreciate and even feel thankful and grateful that idols and images have preserved for us the thought of the ancients about God, and indicate for us experiences they had in their spiritual lives—just as much as the *creeds* and *doctrines* of non-idolatrous religious systems do with regard to their thoughts and experiences. The law of Active Participation that Navavidhan enjoins, urges us to seek and accept for our *Sadhan*, all such thoughts and experiences whether expressed in pictorial symbols or in creeds and doctrines. But we can *worship* neither creeds and doctrines, nor idols and images.

Basis of Humanism

Lastly, Navavidhan has helped us to realize the *basis of Humanism*. That basis is the deeply mystic solidarity that obtains in the Spirit world. And it is that basis—that reality of solidarity, that makes humanism both indispensable and unavoidable. Experiences are related of Budha and Sree Krishna, of Jesus and Keshub that become intelligible to us when we find that such great teachers and *Sadhaks* bore witness to this *indwelling solidarity of the spirit world*. Budha realised that he was *Jnanam anantam* (infinite consciousness); Sree Krishna realised and manifested to his disciple the *Viratrupa* (his cosmic Soul); Jesus was transfigured on the Mount and realised his unity with the prophets of old; Keshub in Calcutta in the nineteenth century realised that he was a cosmic personality with hundreds of eyes and ears and hundreds of hands and feet! Such souls realised that they were not only one-among-the-many but that they were *one-with-the-many*. It is because there is this underlying solidarity, this mutual dependance that there is no escape from humanism. Economic solidarity and social and family solidarity are all projections or faint reproductions of this deep and grand spiritual solidarity. It is the glory of the Navavidhan that it has brought us the insight that helps to realise this fundamental spiritual fact and to understand records and traditions of such realisations all over the world. If God is with us evermore, He has also kept our fellow spirits with us always. If death parts us in physical life, nothing can separate soul from soul in Spirit life. For this bond, this union, this solidarity is no other than God Himself !

WORLD-CONSCIOUSNESS*

When last I was speaking here on God-consciousness I touched on the three stages of attaining unto it. First the stage of *Information* when we hear about God, second the stage of *Inference* when reason dawns in us and we verify what we hear or find recorded in the sacred scripts of the world and conclude the existence of God from the design of the universe; and third the stage of *Intuition* the stage of direct vision or of God-consciousness. This is the beginning of the religious life; and realising God first within our own hearts we next find Him in external nature, in things and men.

This God-consciousness includes world-consciousness and we take that up to-day. We know that to be conscious of a thing is to perceive it and perception results in thinking, feeling and willing or activity. When we see a thing we are either attracted or repelled by it and this leads to activity. If attracted we examine what it is and learn more of it and if repelled we try to be away from it, or have nothing to do with it. Where there is no strong emotion, where we do not express it in our profession either of nationalism or loyalty for example, our perception is not complete. Our views are merely borrowed and mercenary and we are cold. We have no true vision. The test of consciousness surely, then, is feeling and conduct. When Saul was persecuting the Christians, he had suddenly a new vision one day on his way to Damascus That was a true vision; for his entire emotion was roused and his conduct changed thereafter.

---

* The substance of Dr. B. C. Ghosh's lecture on World-Consciousness at Simla.—From the W. & N. D. of June 10, 1915.

As we grow in life we grow in consciousness; we have different and more complete percepts. Long ago there was a time when I thought my body is myself. Slowly as I passed from outer to inner consciousness I felt that my self was more than my body. Then gradually I came to know that I am not even a bundle of sensations and emotions but a unity, a permanent one in the changing many, that I am remaining one and the same through the varied experiences of joy, anger, sorrow—through streams of thought and gusts of mood and that I am always related to the experiences on my part. Then again I perceive once more that my unity is not merely passive, that is, that I am not a mere recording plate but can originate thoughts and actions; thus I know I can control and direct my own destiny, that I am a spirit related to other spirits and also a spirit continually held in the arms of another spirit द्वासुपर्णा सयुजा सखया समान वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ॥ Then I rise to God-consciouness and self-consciousness. It is now I know myself really. It is in relation to the Supreme Spirit that I rise to an adequate and full knowledge of myself. I revere myself—I have true आत्मज्ञान true self-knowledge and self-reverence.

When we have this experience we become more and more familiar with the outer world. At first we have only a materialistic knowledge of the material world. We do not really ever understand the material world first. Do we not remember Tennyson's lines?

> Flower in the crannied walls,
> I pluck you out of the crannies ;—
> Hold you here, root and all, in my hand.
> Little flower—but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and Man is.

When the scientist says that mind is a product of matter he is only confessing his superficial knowledge of things. When the materialists of the 19th century resolved the universe into a mere conglomeration of atoms or sequence of sensations they only spoke of an abstraction. An atom or molecule is an abstract conception. It is not knowable by any of our senses. Though generally satisfied with materialistic studies of the universe we are sometimes rudely awakened to a fresh truth. Perhaps we lose a friend or a near relative and that rouses our whole being to a questioning of our attitude. We learn, then, the tangible world is not all, that the world is not dead, that it is full of life and animation. To the savage the world is full of spirits; everything is the seat of a spirit. When he worships a clod of earth or a piece of stone he is worshipping something living. As the savage slowly gets materialised he loses this vision and things become, thereafter, dead to him. But it is a return to this animation, this sense of spirit-vibration that we are in need of. Then we too will see that the world is full of Spirit, that nothing is dead; that God loves me; that His love blossoms forth in all the flowers and is spread over hills, rivers and seas; and that the external world is merely a dealing of One Spirit with another.

With the realisation of all this we fiind that spirit transcends time, space and causality; that the spiritual world is not conditioned by them. For instance, Love transcends time; If I love you to-day and cease to do so tomorrow, then my love is no love. So too with regard to *Dharma* or righteousness. If I am moral to-day and cease to be so tomorrow, then I am not moral at all. Consciousness, thus, goes beyond time and space. In World-consciousness—in the perception of the deep spiritual unity of the world the sufferings of another become mine. When Ratnákar was told by Narada and his parents and sisters that he alone was responsible for all his crimes, that he alone had to suffer for the fruit thereof though they were taking advantage of all his deeds, that was an individualistic conception in religion. The insight of Christianity and of Vaishnavism under Chaitanya and Ramanuja have changed this attitude. I am responsible for the sins of society. Jesus and Budha took on themselves the sins of others; they died for others. When the poor were fed Jesus considered himself fed too and when the starving beggar was turned out, Jesus was turned out. A sin committed in Europe or India or Japan falls on me too as part of corporate Humanity. If I am wanting in love I am keeping back the progress of the world. This is the true world-consciousness,—the perception of the unity of the world which makes even the sluggard rise and raise the Humanity around. This perception, vision, came to Budha and Jesus and they demanded it of all. Togo and Nelson too laid down their lives for their country; but in this they caused the slaughter of thousands of other people. But when Budha and Jesus laid down their lives not a hair was injured of another man. That is the difference between a selfish patriot and a man of all-consuming love.

Whether we have this perception or not, this unity exists in the world. Though we may just now be engaged in killing each other, we too, every one, will have, in time, this glorious vision—the vision of Human solidarity, the vision of Divinity in Humanity,—the vision of all Humanity held in the arms of the Divine mother. When the veil drops from the eye, the *Viswarup* vision stands revealed in all its glory !

THE UNITY OF GOD*

Recalling what I said in my first lecture on God-consciousness we found it is the perception of the Unity that upholds the universe. Passing then the stages of Information and Inference, the *Sadhak* finally comes to see God face to face wherein all his previous doubts, and questionings disappear, for he is in the presence of the very Deity he is seeking. Today we will try to understand what this Unity means. Various opinions are held regarding this Unity. There is the doctrine of Polytheism which says that man worships more than one God. But that this is an importation from the West. We have no word in our languages corresponding to the word Polytheism. It is the coining of the Western mind. But is Polytheism possible? Man cannot worship more than one God at a time. It may be that he may change his God time after time, as his conception of God changes. But that is a change that is welcome, for it is a sign of growth. Perhaps what is meant by saying that there is Polytheism is that a particular community is polytheistic. That is possible. Nay, a community is always polytheistic. Just as there are children and youths and adults in a community so there must be persons at different stages of spiritual life holding very different conceptions of God. An idol, we have seen, is a thought of God or his image not God Himself. Different idols tell us of different conceptions of God. The savage worships not the stone but the spirit in the stone. All objects appear to him as having a spirit in each. Such was the conception of child-Humanity. So it deified every object,—the sun, the sea, the moon, etc. But deifying every object it found that the spirit in one is the spirit in the other, *i.e.* the spirit is universal. From this objective idea of God, man rises to *Pantheism*. God is all in all and the universe exists not. God alone exists. To this school of thought belonged Spinoza.

---

* The substance of Dr. B. C. Ghosh's lecture—From the W. & N. D. of June 24, 1915.

Or again, if the national feeling, the feeling for one's own race and community, be strong as in the Jew and all Semites generally, God is not identified with external nature but is conceived as a subject like man. God is with us said the Jews. He is a spirit, a leader of our nation alone, and the gods of other peoples are false. Here the Unity of God rises as a subjective idea. In the other case it is objective and predominantly immanent. To the Semite God exists apart from external nature *i.e.*, the external nature exists side by side with God who holds sway over it. But this dualism is not supported by the Upanishads, though we find it even in our country especially in the Sankhya system.

If the objective view led to Pantheism in our land it led to Agnosticism in the West. The finite and the infinite are bound up but the infinite is unknowable. This proposition of the agnostic is undoubtedly a legitimate inference from the theological position in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Christian divines of the time divided God's attributes into the moral and the metaphysical and while claiming to know the former were inclined (with their doctrine of relativity of knowledge) to declare the latter to be not knowable. This Agnosticism has its corresponding school in India too in those who accept Brahma as *Nirguna.* It is said that God should be limited if he were to have *Gunas.* But Ramanuja and others have explained that all attributes are knowable, attributes are activities of God merely and so is He manifest to us eternally as लीलामय *Lilamay.*

Thus this conflict between the subjective and the objective or the transcendental and immanental views of God is to be seen in every country; but an attempt at reconciliation is also to be found. Gita teaches us that God is a unity of the object and the subject, He is the soul of all souls. He is both the क्षेत्र and the क्षेत्रज्ञ as well as the ज्ञान in the क्षेत्रज्ञ Jesus and St. Paul said in the same way that God is a unity of the outside world, of the spirits as well as of both these. Hence God is a self-manifesting spirit in nature and man. It is here that the distinction between the inner and the outer disappears and we see a Unity of both.

Looking at the same from a different angle, a barrel has unity; its unity is kept up by loops of iron. The different parts of a stone are kept together by cohesion. The unity of the body is kept up by life. The sensations which I feel are unified through me. The sensations are not conscious of themselves; it is I that is conscious of them and this I is the unity of all emotion, thought and will. Sensations are impressions from the outside world but again they are my own activities,—not originated by me but in me, as in the case of a sensation of light. When looked at from this side the distinction between the inner and the outer disappears here also.

So the outside world is the activity of the divine mind. His activity we see in flower, leaf, fruit, friend, parents and all, *i.e.*, we come back to a more dignified, a noble form of Animism. For God-consciousness we need no longer go to an object in the middle position between us and God and infer from it but see Him direct. This is *Yoga* It is not an approach to the ultimate cause link by link through various sub-causes but an immediate perception of God as the power in all things. God here and now. It is a flash and when this flash is on us we see the unity of all spirits, of the kingdom of God which is not merely the means of escaping the Roman yoke as the Jews thought but a taste of Inter-dependence as Jesus interpreted it. For what is wanted is not independence but Interdependence, *i e.*, the realisation of God as a unity through all nations. *Arjuna's Viswarup Darsan is not of a still universe* but all the divine activities unifying friends and foes.

This search after Unity is in all lands. But

Unity is not a resolution of Plurality into one. Spiritual things cannot be labelled as one and two. All that exists is God. This पूर्णम् is such that if you take away the पूर्णम् what remains is still the पूर्णम् for spiritual unity is above all our limited mathematical notions. The unity of God is not of the barrel or of stone, it is spiritual एकमेवाद्वितीयं therefore, does not mean a colourless unity killing out all differentiation but a spiritual unity, *i e.*, unity without uniformity. All things do not manifest God to us equally and at all times for God chooses His own ways. We fail to see Him always though he is ever with us, because we do not live the life whereby He would reveal Himself unto us. For this vision comes not through mere study of scripture or by discussion but by the grace of Him who revealeth Himself. A good moral life, lived in the thick of the world and for the world is the only way to get admission within the portals of *Yoga*.

UNITY OF MAN*

It is quite bold of one to speak of the Unity of man at a time when a greater part of Humanity is engaged in a murderous war. It is the West that has always been teaching us that no nation could live a segregated life and that the economic solidarity of Humanity is inevitable; that the nations depend upon one another in all things and that a life cut off from others means practically death. The seer in the Gita too has taught us to labor without desiring for its fruit, for with my labor and yours the labor of all generations of men past and present is mixed up. To make a small pen millions of men are employed in East and West from the time of unearthing the necessary metal to the finishing touch. Is not this the solidarity of Humanity and is it not the West that taught us this particularly! But how is it that West itself is engaged in this deadly war? It is because the West is lacking in the perception of spiritual unity which lies behind all economic solidarity. Where this perception is not, there disintegration of the economic order and political union will set in. Western nations without possessing the Cosmic consciousness thirsted for more land and more land. That is why their talk of solidarity has now become an illusion, an unreality. It is the perception of spiritual Unity alone that makes economic unity and political federation possible and permanent.

---

* The substance of Dr. B. C Ghosh's lecture Unity of Man at Simla.—From the W. & N. D. of July 1, 1915

The other day we saw that by Unity of God we mean the Corporate Being of all that is, *i e.,* what coincides with all Humanity and the non-human world; that the infinity of God implies a continuous activity everywhere and always. Therefore God is continuously active and He is so in his relationship to man. If Religion, then, is God's dealings with man, it must show, all the so-called religions must show, a continuity throughout. But man clings to his own religion and looks down on others. Are we then to supplant one religion by another? Are other religions different from mine? Why are there so many religions? The answer to such questioning comes when we place ourselves in the right attitude. In youth every one of us believed in a unique revelation, *i.e.* God has revealed Himself only to my people and my country and that He denied the truth to other nations. But a love of truth will falsify this position and show us truths in all relligions. If so, the question comes again, why should these truths be found in other religions than mine. How are these truths carried to other religions? This is answered in different ways. To some Satan carried it thither and mixed it up with falsehood to mislead men. Or it is said all other religions are preparations for the great religion of Christ. The Greek, the Roman and other pre-christian religions are imperfect and the perfect truth is in Christianity alone. This is the doctrine of final revelation. Mahomed too held the same position. He recognised the Judaic and Christian revelations but regarded his own Islam as the final revelation. But there can never be a finality to God's truth and Revelation, for then we limit the unlimited. Revelation is eternally going on and the so-called religions of the world are but stages in the progressive revelation of God to man. There is a continuity in the various religions.

It is *now* we understand what our attitude to other religions must be. If they are parts of a progressive revelation, we must certainly accept them, though to different men different sides of it seem to come first. If Christianity and Mahommedanism were identical religions, then there is no need to go from the one to the other. But because they are different therefore must we accept both,—for they are different truths. If I be a born Hindu, I am, still, to accept all other religions. But I cannot give up my Hinduism to accept Christianity. A man who wishes to become wealthy never gives up his wealth whenever he gets a new supply but adds it to what he already has. Thus if a Hindu, while remaining so, accepts Christianity and Islam, then there is no need for conversion. The present attitude that my religion alone will continue to spread while others will perish is not right; all religions will spread equally well.

Then is not our duty to the Scripture already shown? The Christian says the Bible is *the* scripture and all other scriptures are false and the same story is repeated by the followers of other religions. But the fact is that the sacred books of all religions are scriptures. They all record the dealings of God with man. So while accepting one scripture we cannot reject the other. Our salvation is in accepting them all; it lies in a synthesis of them all; it comes, for each one, through a realisation of all that is recorded in all the scriptures. Salvation is a continuous process therefore.

Next we shall see that one law is working in the life of Humanity. This law is the law of Synthesis or समन्वय. History is rightly understood only when this law, even the law of progressive Revelation is grasped. Christianity is a synthesis of all the old Babylonian, Egyptian, Palestinia: and Mediterranean religions; is it not? All the past is presented in it. And is that not a great compliment? Is not Hinduism a synthesis of a thousand and one religions that existed in India? It is not certainly a conglomeration as some have interpreted. Therefore it is that Hinduism will not die; for truth is imperishable. So too Budhism. Budhism in China and Japan is a synthesis of all the ancient religions of these countries. Confucianism and Shintoism are not dead but living to-day in the Budhism of the far East.

Religion has been misinterpreted by the West in another way. It is said that Religion has set back the progress of the world. It declared Crusades and Jehads and plunged Humanity in bloodshed. But that is not so. Wherever the followers of the various religions neglected the law of synthesis and thought that one's own creed was complete in itself, then there came these Jehads. The Crusades came because the law of religion was disregarded. When you go to the tops of a cliff and disregarding the law of gravitation throw yourself down, then what will follow but destruction!

Thus we have only one God, one Scripture, one Salvation and one Communion and this was proclaimed by Keshub Chunder Sen in the 19th century. Though we are glad that such a great discovery was made by one of our own countrymen, yet we will ask if what one saw can be the law and truth for all. Our answer is in the affirmative. The law of Synthesis and Assimilation is found in every country. Generations of men and women in every country have assimilated, consciously or unconsciously, other truths. They followed the law of Synthesis, being aware of it, it may be. Was there no gravitation before Newton discovered it? The law of Synthesis was accepted by Jesus too. He said he came to fulfil, not to destroy. The doctrine of समन्वय is found in the Gita. Vijnan Bikshu has told us that the six systems of Indian philosophy are supplementary, not contradictory. Comparative Religious study has accepted this position to-day. Thus there is only one church universal and invisible and the man who follows the law of Synthesis and Assimilation, consciously or unconsciously, belongs to this church.

TWO SERMONS

I—The Quest of Satyam (*The Real*)*

The preacher dwelt upon the quest of Truth. The Real, he said, had been sought usually in a limited way. Some have sought the True, the Real in Nature alone and convinced that the material world, the world of matter and sense alone being the Reality, declared either that the ideal world was an illusion or a mere "epiphenomenon"—like the whistle or the shadow of a moving train. Others convinced also of the reality of the human world—of Society (*Samsara*) in which we live and move and have our earthly being, have sought the Real in the social. Others again have gone beyond the material to the ideal and convinced of the reality of the Ideal world declared the material life and the social life an illusion and a hindrance. While yet a fourth group have realised that beyond the ideal is the spiritual world—and they have sought to enthrone the spirit (the Atmá) alone as the real. But all such theories of the world and reality are partial. They are not altogether false. An adequate search for the Real reveals however the glorious vision of the Navavidhan, the vision that the material and the social, the ideal and the spiritual are all real and that the Reality consists of them all,—that it is the one and the same Real who makes all these partial worlds equally real. It is God who is proclaimed in Nature, manifested in Mind, established in Society and enthroned in the Soul. There is nothing real without Him and everything becomes real with Him and with our vision of Him as the Soul of all things and beings that are. From another point of view, it may be said that the proof that anything is real lies in the fact that everything, nature and society, mind and soul *can be made real.* It is by making the world real to us, by making society, the church, the nation real to us we become convinced of their Reality. So Keshub prayed at Haridwar—the great pilgrimage where the holy Ganges starts on its beneficent career on the plains—that the hills and the valleys may not hinder the vision of the Real, but become real themselves by the touch and the presence of the Real—that inert matter may become "golden" (জড় সোনা হয়) with the advent of God and that all nature may glow with the splendour of gold with the manifestation of Hari (হরিনামে হিরণ্ময়)

---

* The substance of Dr. B. C. Ghosh's sermon at the B. B. Mandir on Sunday, the 7th of November—From the W. & N. D. of Dec. 2, 1915.

*II—The Quest of the Spirit (Jnanam)**

If the material world be real, if society be real, if mind be real and spirit be real too, what can be the relation between the realities? In what sense is matter real? How can we say also that mind is real? Forms of matter and forms of sense are our perceptions or perceptual interpretations of Reality and if we once realise that central stimulation of our nerves may lead us to project forms of sense in external space (such as naturally takes place in conditions of delirium and insanity) we can rise to the thought that matter (mrit मृत्) is *an influence* upon our senses from not any object (वस्तु) as such but from another subject or other subjects. We can rise to the conception of matter (मृत्) as an influence or stimulus from God who is establishing a connection with us through what we call matter and material forms. Such a thought does not deny the reality of matter for any activity of God must be as real as God Himself.

---

* The substance of Dr. B. C. Ghosh's Sermon at the B. B. Mandir on Sunday, the 14th of November.—From the W. & N. D. of Dec. 2, 1915.

Again, if we take the idealist view, such as the great teacher of the ancient Greek Academy expounded, we should be able to say that the *chit* (चित्) was real, that the *idea*, the concept of a thing was the universal and the universal was the real for the particular was temporary and evanescent. And we know also that the *chit* in us—our thought, our memories, our desires and our emotions did not rise spontaneously but owed their existence to stimuli from what we call the "not-self." This *chit* in us then is also *an influence* from another Being or things. The *chit* is another form of the activity of God within us.

Further if we follow the thought of Plato to its development in the mind of Plato himself through forty years of his Academic career, we can rise to the thought that *ideas* do not float about in empty space but that they are held in organic unity in *spirits* and that these spirits again are not unrelated to one another but form a *world of spirits* with their home in the Supreme Spirit.

Thus we rise to the conception of the Spirit-God as the supremest Reality who does not live in His infiinitude as the great Alone, but dwells with and in a world of spirits, ("a kingdom of heaven"); and His *dealings with this spirit-world* take the forms of *chit* (चित्) and *mrit* (मृत्) of mind and matter. The sensible world and the ideal world are His eternal *lila* (लीला) with His creatures whom He loves and to whom He communicates His Righteousness and Holiness.

If then we can rise to the realisation of the spirit-world where we all live whether in this life or in the life hereafter, we can also understand that those who have departed hence are still with us and hold "communion" with us. Keshub whose birth-day, was about to be celebrated was not dead but living with us and in us, in God and in the kingdom of Heaven within us.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE NAVAVIDHAN*

In his presidential speech Dr. B. C. Ghosh expressed his sense of responsibility and thankfulness for the honour done to him and hoping that the ability to expound the New Ideal will be given him, proceeded to lay down that the new ideal of the Brahmo Somaj—the Navavidhan—was distinctly spiritual, spiritual not in the sense of antagonistic to the material but as comprehending everything material. It was a life of the spirit and a life in the spirit. In the sacred city of the followers of Guru Nanak, the perpetual singing of the praises of God, the incessant glorification of God symbolised the Life Spiritual,—a life of constant God-consciousness. Another practice in the Golden Temple gave us a second symbol. The thank offerings of a grateful heart are transformed into divine blessing, into the *Prasad* of the Deity to anxious souls seeking mercy, help and strength from Heaven. This transubstantiation symbolises the solidarity of the life spiritual, the interdependence in the spirit-world. Whenever a voice is raised in praise and prayer, it finds an echo in a thousand hearts: yes, the whole spirit-world responds to our heart's cry and partakes of our heart's joy. And the Great Spirit, in whom all spirits live, move and have their being is not slow to respond. The leadings of the spirit, the guidance of God is there always with us whether we recall or realise it or not. Shall we not see,—do we not see the blessing of God, the leading and guidance of the King of kings in the Royal Proclamation of the other day? And shall not our hearts rise in utter thankfulness? God hath not left any land without His witnesses, likewise He hath not left any soul without them. Every soul was being constantly filled with God's Wisdom, Holiness and Love, and the destinies of every people and every nation were safe in His hands. His Providence is continually sending dispensations to all peoples without respect, . and His Wisdom and Holiness and Love were eternally engaged in saving humanity, in transforming man's sins and waywardness into blessings and instruments of salvation. The Chairman (Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni) had said that the ideal of the Brahmo Somaj transcends limitations. Yes, the New Ideal does transcend limitations because it is eminently spiritual. The life of the spirit includes the life material, comprehends the life social and the life political, and still transcends them. Because all things of the spirit transcend time, space and causality, transcend *desh, kala karaṇa*. This is the test of everything spiritual. Love is spiritual, and love is not limited by space, time or motives. Nor is justice, nor is righteousness, nor charity, nor wisdom.

---

* Presidential Address at the Amritsar Theistic conference. Delivered extempore by Dr. B. C. Ghosh, on December 28, 1919.—From the W. & N. D. of January 8 and 15, 1920.

—to live by law
To act the law we live by, without fear,
And because right is right to follow right
Ware wisdom in the scorn of consequence—

That was the nature of Justice and Righteousness. Things of the spirit never have any limitations, they grow incessantly, eternally endlessly. He (the President) was asked if he was going to the "Extremist Congress" and it occurred to him that the life spiritual knew no moderation, that *things spiritual were all extreme*, that they suffered by moderation. Who on this platform—standing before the glorious ideal of the Navavidhan,—who would ask for moderation in justice, moderation in righteousness, or moderation in love and charity? Ceaseless in well-doing, unmoderate in self-reformation, relentless in self suppression, resistless of all evil, restless in the righting of all wrong. Limitless in love, the life spiritual stood up for extremism. Is not mercy the extreme of justice? Is not love the fulfilment of the law? And with this consciousness of extremism there rises the consciousness of the wonderful solidarity of humanity.

"Wherever wrong is done,
Beneath the all-beholding sun
That wrong is done to us!"

And that wrong has to be righted and transmuted into a blessing through the grace of God.

All social ideals, the President went on to say, all political ideals are parts of the religious ideals which man has received in every age and in every clime. The religions of the world were gifts of God; the scriptures of the world were records of God's dealings with His children; the creeds and theologies of the world were so many preserved concepts of the religious world. Life alone could interpret life and spiritual experience alone can understand and interpret the experiences behind the dogmas and doctrines of various religions. The Navavidhan in its new light has revealed to us the fact that all religions are equally true, that leadings of the spirit that guidance of the spirit has made man realise and enjoy the blessings of the spirit. And the blessings of the spirit are for each and for all. Every religion is for me and for all, and from that final point of view, *every religion is universal.* The Navavidhan, therefore, asks a Hindu to remain a Hindu, only he must become Christian and Moslem as well. No Moslem is asked to give up his Koran, but he is asked to accept the Bible and the Vedas as well. The Christian is not required to throw his Bible overboard, but to take along with it all the other scriptures of the world. *Things of the spirit can be and must be shared in common.* We must all be partakers of the rich feast that the Dispensation of the Spirit has provided for us all. A life in the spirit soon makes such participation easy. But intellect fails. Intellect leads to eclecticism—to the "L. C. M. and G. C. M." doctrine as he has been pointing out for nearly twenty years. If we struck a G. C. M. of our spiritual experience and that of a Christ or a Krishna, or a Mahomed, or a Chaitanya, how little must that be! How poorer we must be by this attempt to apply a mechanical process to spiritual facts. Truths are organic and spiritual experiences have a solidarity which cannot be dealt with in the manner of the surgeon with impunity. There is a doctrine—which may be called the *Doctrine of Response*—held by eminent minds,—devout spirits, which says that we cannot accept any belief that does not fiind a response in our hearts. True we cannot, but we cannot legitimmately proceed to the further inference that therefore those beliefs must be wrong or false. Here again we must remember that spiritual experience alone gives us the right to *adequate* interpretations. For instance the sayings of the monistic, *Bhakta* Ramkrishna, are being interpreted dualistically by his devoted but dualistic disciples. To the dualist, the transcendent God must come down as an Incarnation to reveal Himself to His creatures. To the monist God is an Indwelling Spirit and as such is incessantly and perpetually incarnating Himself in every soul.

The law of the spirit world is the law of synthesis, of *active participation* and active assimilation. It is a law and not a mere *a-priori* argument. In the light of the New Dispensation the history of the world has to be read anew. Every established religion of the world is a great synthesis. Modern Christianity is a synthesis of the hundred and one religions of the Mediterranean world. Living Hinduism has not spent its force by any means and it is living to-day because it has preserved within its fold the thousands of religions that the Providence of God vouchsafed unto this great land. The religion of Budha has undergone a great transformation in Thibet, China and Japan, because the Budhism of Magadha has been synthetised there with indigenous faiths of Eastern Asia. *So religion grows and survives by this law of synthesis.* And the Navavidhan has come as a challenge to all the world—to live and practise this law of active participation—to vindicate all spiritual experiences by spiritual life, to reinterpret experience by fresh experience, and to reconstruct the Religion of the future on the basis of the actual established religions of the past. If historians of human civilisation have made religion responsible for crusades, jehads, inquisitions and untold sufferings and privations—it is their misinterpretation of facts. It is not Religion but the want of Religion, the violation of the law of synthesis, the refusal to active participation that is responsible for things done in the name of religion. Disregard of the law of gravitation leads to disaster. So does the disregard of the law of active participation and synthesis. Laws of nature cannot be violated with impunity; nor can the laws of the spirit-world—the Laws of the Life-spiritual.

If things of the spirit are meant for all, if the life spiritual is ever growing, ever dynamic ever assimilating, its destiny as unfolded by the New Ideal is a striking vindication of the mystical in all religions. The new Ideal wants us each and all to be the new man of the New

Dispensation. It declares that our destiny is nothing short of the 'Superman'. In the West they have tried to conceive and produce the superman, but there is nothing in the western literature that can compare with the conception of the superman in our epics and in our Pouranic literature. The materialistic superman is described to a nicety and accuracy that the west has failed to depict—in the famous king Ravana of Lanka, wise beyond his generations, with ten heads and twenty eyes on his shoulders, an ideal autocrat who brought his 'Golden Lanka,—'to the acme of prosperity,—well-beloved of his people and a worshipper of Shiva—Ravana so practised his religion that the gods in the heavens were afraid of his powers. He was so philanthropic that he wanted to build a staircase so that all mankind could invade and enjoy heaven. Yet speedy and complete was his downfall. Because he belived and trusted in his own power and in the efficacy of his own virtues. He did not recognise the dispensation of God—the manifestation of God the Spirit. He would not acknowledge the will of the Lord nor seek the *Adesh* and the grace of God in his activities. Such supermen there have been in this world who built up Babylon, Rome, Carthage and Berlin. And their fate has been the fate of Babylon and Berlin. Nothing endures, nothing lasts, nothing grows, that is not of the Spirit, that is not done with the *Adesh*, the command and the will of God. Introduce political reforms, social reconciliation, establish philanthropic institutions, hold

Congresses and Conferences, cover your land with a network of schools and colleges—but nothing will last, nothing will produce the good you aim at unless it is done in the service of God, with the *Adesh*, with the command and the sanction of God. The Superman of the Spiritual Type is a slave of God, obedient, ever ready for self-surrender and self-renunciation even unto crucifixion. The German Type of the Superman has always been well understood in this land of ours. This land has no need of such, the world has no need of such. The new Man of the New Dispensation is the superman of the Spiritual Type. "Long since has the little bird 'I' flown away never to return"—that is his declaration. In self-effacement and not in self-assertion, in self-surrender and not in self-imposition lies the strength, the superiority, the *superness* of the real Super Man.

The Navavidhan has vindicated the spiritual Superman by another momentous revelation Our Vaishnava literature says that only one kind of "I-ness", one kind of self-consciousness, one kind of *ahankar* is pardonable, it is the consciousness of having done the will of God, of having served Him and glorified Him. In Christian and other devotional literaturewe also find similar sentiments, similar justification. But here also the New Light has shown that I could not do the will of God, if Jesus of Nazareth had not given me strength; that I could not sing the name of God with pious devotion, if the devotional fervour of Sri Chaitanya had not moved my tongue; that I could not stand steadfast in my faith with the banner of truth in my hand, if he of the Arabian desert had not infused his fervour of faith in my arms, that I could not reconcile the religions of the world if Keshub-soul did not come and spur me on. What strength the man of the Navavidhan has is not his own. In his strength lies the strength of ten. In his efforts is to be found the co-operation of the entire spirit-world. Thus the Man of the New Dispensation – the New Child of the Navavidhan, the Nava Shishu—the Super man, is not a single personality but a multi-personality, an Omnipersonality--a *Virata purusha.* He can say "Socrates is my head, Jesus is my heart, Chaitanya is my tongue, Mahomet is my right hand and Howard is my left." His is a composite personality. He has attained Yoga with Humanity. This is no abstract "Humanity" —this is no abstract poetic "*Vishwa-manava*". The Superman of the New Ideal is a spirit reality—a concrete life and a concrete soul. When the man of the New Dispensation becomes a Superman - and such is the destiny of each and all of us - he is indeed transfigured. Those descriptions of *Virata-purusha,* those accounts of transfigurations, those visions of mystic poets like Dante are not fanciful creations, but statements of spiritual facts and spiritual experiences. Rabindranath's conception of Bharat-Mata as a Super Woman—Super Mother embracing in her arms a thousand races and a thousand civilisations is a possibility for every woman in our land. The Super Man is the unity of all souls in one soul. And with this perception the cry of Bengal for Bengalis, Punjab for Punjabis, India for Indians,—becomes meaningless. Each for all and all for each, such is the wonderful solidarity in the spirit-world, the solidarity which is impelling every one of us, whether we are conscious of it or not, to this great Oneness. Here also we find the reconciliation of all social effort and political ideals, the reconciliation of Individualism and Socialism, the reconciliation of Aristocracy and Democracy, not in independence, nor utter dependence but in one grand *interdependence*. So that as Keshub declared that One-without-a-second was there in Heaven: and now there is One-without-a-second upon our earth. *Ekamevadwitiyam* in heaven and *ekamevadwitiyam* on earth—to the glory of God and peace and unity on earth—even, the peace that passeth understanding.

PARAGRAPH PULPIT*

The Minister had said—"All is vanity, myself the vanity of vanities, but with the worship of the Spirit everything acquires worth and reality." Everything turns into 'gold' with the vision of Hari therein. So far from being a hindrance the material becomes a transparent aid to vision. To the man of the world the world is an obstruction. To the *yogi* it is transparent like glass. It manifests the Spirit and His workings. The sensible should be understood as the manifestation of the supersensible. The ideal and the spiritual should shine through all things material. Thus and thus alone we can understand the relation between *Sakara* (the Fromful) and *Nirakara* (the Formless). The *sakara* is the organ of the *nirakara*—its instrument of expression. True *Nirakara* is that which is not confined to one *akara* (form) but can take on all possible forms. The Formless, then, becomes the Formful.

The material is limited in time and space. This time and space are ultimately spiritual, the only reality is thus nothing but the grace of God that worketh and endureth for ever. Space is the dependence on God that sustains us for ever. The future for which we are so anxious, for which we make such provisions does not belong to us. Its uncertainty betrays that it does not depend upon our activity. The future is nothing but God's activity. The knowledge of the ways of Providence,—the knowledge of the workings of the Spirit gives us knowledge of the future. Insight here is foresight. When we let God's will lead us and guide us, when we let God's activity fill our lives, the future loses its uncertainty and ceases to hold any dread or anxiety. Looking upon *the future thus as God's activity* the man of the *Navavidhan* is filled with faith and trust. His own future, the future of his family and his Church, of his country and his empire are all in God's safe keeping.

---

* Substance of sermons preached by Dr. B. C. Ghosh, at the B. B. Mandir, Calcutta on Sundays the 13, 20 and 27, June, 1920.—From the W. & N. D. of June 17 and 24, and July 1, 1920.

*

* *

The Minister had said that even a piece of straw is full of God. The Indwelling Spirit manifests Himself everywhere. We learn to divide the world into the formful (*sakara*) and the formless (*nirakara*). In the child there is no such distinction, to the *yogi* also the formless and the formful become one. The inner and the outer become one. The world is full of God, and God is full of His world. It is our destiny to make the formful into the formless and the formless into the formful. As a matter of fact *do we not daily change the formless into the formful?* The longings and yearnings of the heart express themselves in offerings—for instance of flowers.

of speech spoken or written. All symbols are expressions of the unseen. Things spiritual continually strive for material expression, so that in *yoga*-vision the Spirit stands manifest in Nature, Man and Society. The sensible material world becomes aglow with Divinity.

Likewise there is continual transformation of the material into the spiritual. Does not science reduce visible things into the active play of invisible molecules and atoms? Does not thought get behind perceptible things and by likeness and difference reduce them into concepts? These concepts again are visualized back in symbols, images and idols. An idol is a materialized *conception of man about God* Idol worship is impossible because man can never worship a concept, a thought or an idea. A person alone can be worshipped. We cannot worship even truth, wisdom, love or righteousness. But we do worship the True, the All-mighty, the All-wise, the All-loving and the All-holy. The formless is inseparably related to the formful, and their true nature and true relation become known at the highest stage of mutual transformation. The Navavidhan has given us the true insight into the *sakara* (formful) and *nirakara* (formless), into the meaning of forms and symbols, and into their right place in our *sadhan*.

*
* *

The Minister has said that—'God is manifest *in the world* but not *to the worldlv*'. God reveals Himself everywhere. God stands in constant and direct relation to everything in the world. God is not the remotest link in a chain of causation, but He is the cause in every cause, proximate or remote. He is not merely the First Cause, but the cause in every cause. It is His energy and His activity that is manifest in every activity in the world. The Upanishads teach that God's perception dwells in every perception of ours (প্রতিবোধবিদিতম্); the psalmist sing "In Thy light we see light"; and the Navavidhan tells us to-day that every activity, physical or mental, natural or spiritual is deathless or eternal, because it stands in relation to the activity of the Eternal Himself. Energy is eternal, it only transforms. Every activity in this world is grounded in the eternal and endures by constant transfiguration. All law and all order in Nature and mind is but a section or a projection of the activity of God's will.

The Navavidhan sees new meaning in old things, new revelations in old scriptures, new relations in old associations. It not only vindicates the old but transforms it into something new. It sees *sakara* (the formful) in *nirakara* (the formless) and *nirakara* in *sakara* It universalises and so *spiritualises all facts and events. The Christ of history has to become the Christ of experience.* The sonship of God which became an actual fact on the banks of the Jordan on a certain day 2000 years ago, has to become a fact to-day in my and your experience on the banks of the Ganges. The Son of God (*Brahmasantan*) is to be made flesh in every age and every clime. Nay he is to be made flesh day by day in every soul. The Navavidhan thus removes the limits of space and time. All knowledge, all truth whether it came to Plato or Aristotle or our *rishis* (sages), or to thinkers of to-day come to the Navavidhan and suffers transfiguration. All piety, all devotion wherever found belong to the Navavidhan and are lifted up in its atmosphere on to sublimer heights.

In our daily lives we are constantly generalizing, rising from the concrete individual to the abstract class; science is constantly explaining the object of perception in terms of molecules and atoms that are imperceptible; philosophy is reading law and order in the world of thought. Everywhere, thus, the *sakara* (the formful) is changed into *nirakara* (the formless), the material transformed into the spiritual. The spiritual, again, is made flesh and becomes concrete. When we talk of accepting the doctrines, teachings and theories of Christianity we really mean the acceptance of the concrete spirit of Christ. For *Christianity is an abstraction, but Christ a concrete fact*. The "Navavidhan" itself is an abstraction. The concrete spiritual fact is the life and character—the soul of Keshub! So we sing "কেশব চরিত্র পরম পবিত্র মূর্ত্তিমান নূতন বিধান"—"Keshub's life sublime and holy, is the New Dispensation incarnate." In the spirit-world which is the real world *spirits* are the *facts* not doctrines, nor theories, nor propositions. The synthesis of religions, the *samanvaya* of

Navavidhan, therefore, is really and actually a *Sadhu samagama* (the Communion of Saints) of the spirit-world. The Spirit Himself is the greatest of facts and the concretest of realities. *Yoga* with Him is the basis of all communion.

WORK AND IDEAL OF NAVAVIDHAN*

Speaking in English Dr. Ghosh dwelt on the inter mixture of science and philosophy in all religious thought—(ancient science and ancient philosophy in ancient religion and modern science and modern philosophy in modern religion) and pointed out the influence of the biological principles of Heredity and Variation in the formulation of Budhistic and Christian doctrines of the early centuries. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity was an apt illustration of such influence. He then proceeded to elucidate the work and ideal of Navavidhan which seeks not only to explain but rehabilitate ancient doctrine and ancient thought. To him, as a Navavidhani the creeds and dogmas of all religions were valuable repositories of religious concepts, behind which there lay rich spiritual experiences of the nations. Idolatry, Dr. Ghosh, proceeded to explain, was veneration of concepts—not a worship. For true worship can be of a person and a person alone. Homolatry—worship of Jesus, of Rama, of Krisna, of Budha, was also a psychological impossibility. In reality, 'man-worship' was the unconscious attempt at

---

* Reprinted from Navavidhan, January 8 of 1931.—Substance of an address of welcome at the Vaijayanti (Jubilee) Sangha held on Dec. 27th 1930.

'Sadhu Somagam'—of communion with Saints which was a spiritual need and a spiritual fact. Here again worship is a misnomer for as the Geeta taught, true worship can be of the Supreme Spirit alone. And the Navavidhan emphatically declared that communion with saints was possible only through communion with God. It was God who took us to the saints and not the saints to God. 'Man-worship' was in reality an expression of Humanism in religion. The doctrine of Variation supported the spiritual perception of uniqueness of every individual and argued the claims and rights of minorities in the political sphere. There is thus no cause for dread or fear that a believer in Navavidhan would slide into idolatry of any sort. Nor was there any apprehension that he would come into conflict with any established religion. For to him every religion was true and was a Dispensation of God. The Modern spirit had advanced, Dr. Ghosh pointed out with satisfaction, from mere *toleration* (toleration of other people's views and beliefs) to *appreciation* of other's religions. But the Navavidhan demanded *active participation* of all the religions of the world, for every religion was universal, was meant for all. And that our life is one of eternal progress is not an abstract thought but a positive assertion of a positive fact. Eternal progress meant an eternal process of acceptance and appropriation of all the Spiritual riches of the world. And this endless process of participation has for its end the realisation of Spiritual Solidarity—evidences of which realisa-

tion are to be found in all the deepest Spiritual truths of the established religions of the world. The Transfiguration on the mount, the *Virat-rupa* manifestation on the plains of Kurukshetra, the Anant-Jnan realisation of Budha under the Bodhitree, the *Navadurgar Navasantan* realisation of Keshub in our own days—were al instances of this great Spiritual Solidarity that God has ordained in His spirit world. In fact, economic solidarity, political solidarity, social solidarity were all projections as it were of this great spiritual solidarity. When they sang of *Keshubay sobaro milan,* they referred to the great co-operation that the saints and prophets established in Keshub's nature. The same saints and prophets were ready to co-operate and in fact did co-operate if we only knew it, in our own natures. Navavidhan had thus come to the world with a real gospel of hope and assurance and joy.

PREPARATORY EXERCISES FOR MAGHOTSAV 1931*

JANUARY 1ST—*Unto Rammohun.* Dr. B. C. Ghosh dwelt on another aspect of the Rajah's life. He showed how the Rajah who had early in life written against scriptures and prophets came to uphold them in his controversies with the followers of several established religions; how the Rajah in his naturalistic moods of early life inveighed against established religions and sought for a 'natural' religion but came later to appreciate these religions and defended each against the other! From naturalism he advanced to spiritualism and came to establish public worship on a Vedantic basis. The spirit of Navavidhan the spirit of vindication was working in him though he was unconscious of it. Keshub's statement fifty years after, that the Dispensation of God was sent to this land with the establishment of the worship of Brahma in 1830 but that the recognition and realisation that it was a Dispensation and was to be a New Dispensation, came in 1880—was made on a right perception.

JANUARY 2ND—*Unto Navavidhan.* Dr. B. C. Ghosh spoke of the great work of *rehabilita-*

---

* Reprinted from Navavidhan January 22 of 1931.

tion of old world religions in this new age by Navavidhan. As an illustration he dwelt upon the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in the Christian Church. The Athanasian creed had been decried even in orthodox Christian Churches and yet the creed was *a paraphrase and elaboration of the conception of a Living God* prevalent among the early Christian thinkers. The essential characters of human life on this earth were *respiration* and *reproduction* and if man was made in the image of God, God must have *breath* and *offspring*. And His Breath as well as His Son must be divine and equally divine. The word *persona* in Latin meant a mask that expressed the character an actor assumed on the stage. The Holy Ghost was God in His character of Inspirer and the Son of God was God in His character of Protector and Saviour of His own creation. Dr. Ghosh also pointed out that biological principles (1) That like begets like and (2) That every individual was unique, formed the corner stone of ancient religious doctrines in Christianity and Budhism. Almost all of Jesus' parables taught the unique character of every human individual. Budha's great doctrine of *Ahimsa* was based on this very perception of the unique value every individual has in the world-system and consequently of the groundlessness of *hinsa* or competitive strife.

JANUARY 3RD— *nto Motherland.* In the evening at the Mandir the discussion on our indebtedness to the Motherland was led by Dr. B. C. Ghosh who pointed out that the greatest blessing India had given us was our *upasana*. The order of service was unique and its evolution went hand in hand with the unfolding of a deeply spiritual life in Keshub and his colleagues and their successors. The details in the order were then discussed and the appropriateness of each item was appreciated.

JANUARY 5TH—*Unto Children*. Keshub in a prayer coveted the state of a child, the condition of a lunatic and that of a drunken man. Dr. Ghosh pointed out that in all these conditions there was a disregard of the environment, together with an impulsive *spontaneity* which the saint wanted in his relations to the world. Righteous impulses rising within him (stimulated by God) should not be hampered by rationalisations or calculations of respectability or of worldly considerations. Childlike simplicity, childlike readiness to love all, to help all were also the saint's great concern.

JANUARY 7TH—*Unto the Poor*. The poor are here with us to teach us poorness of spirit and to make us long for the riches of a spiritual life. This was the key note to the thought of the evening. And Dr. B. C. Ghosh pointed out that tne next program in social reform in the Navavidhan communion—and indeed in the whole country, should be the minimisation if not the elimination of povety. Economic institutions trade and commerce, agriculture and industry should be so disposed as to remove the painful poverty of millions in the land. Universal education and universal opportunities should be provided. Landlordism and capitalism to be removed—as they were removed in the early Budhistic and early Christian communities.

JANUARY 9TH—*Unto Great Men.* Communion with saints and prophets was a *Sadhan*, an exercise, that formed a novel feature of the Navavidhan. It reconciled true worship of the Eternal and the Infinite with a true fellowship in the spirit with saints and prophets. It helped the realisation of spiritual solidarity ordained for us by God.

JANUARY 10TH—*Unto Philanthropists.* Dr. Ghosh said that the late Bhai Gour Govinda had pointed out that there were two kinds of philanthropists. In one the *swarupas* of God (kindness, mercy, love) worked and impelled without the subject being aware of it. In the other the working of the Spirit was recognised and realised. In the former subject there was to be found impatience or irritability or dissatisfaction or other defects of mood or character. But in the second group subjects there was a harmony and balance of traits that made for a greater success in all philanthropic efforts.

JANUARY 11TH, SUNDAY—*Unto our Benefactors.* The evening service was conducted by Dr. B. C. Ghosh in the spirit of the day. All benefactors have one Source—the *Mangala data*—Who through Nature, Life and Mind gives us all that we know and ever so much that we do not know. There are many human benefactors of whom we know directly and of whom we think gratefully. But Navavidhan has come to tell us of the wonderful solidarity in the world, the wonderful cooperation in the world. All society, past and present, mix their labor with mine to produce any simple thing that I may call mine. The spiritual riches, the scriptures, the doctrines, the creeds, the *sadhans*, the worship—in the whole world (past and present) are for me and my salvation. Navavidhan has extended our world of benefactors beyond all bounds.

JANUARY 12TH—*Unto Virodhis* (antagonists). Dr. B. C. Ghosh pointed out that the origin of *virodh* (conflict) in matters of faith lay in the *khandatwa* in *fragmentariness* of our conceptions. Any proposition (Thesis) had its opposite (antithesis) and the two had to be reconciled in a synthesis. This again had an antithesis and had to be formed into a larger synthesis. Partial Truths—thus suffered from inadequacy and we had to rise to less and less inadequacy. From this point of view *virodh* was between part truths and in a sense God was responsible for it. So we find in the famous *Chandi stava*—the Goddess described as "residing as error (*Bhranti*) in all beings" Error meant these fragmentary truths—not untruths. Similarly in the Koran we are told to respect the "thought that passeth away" This superseding of thought is really removal of its fragmentary character. Scientific theories based on observation and experiment are superseded by embodiment in larger and more comprehensive theories. St. Paul also speaks of this superseding of partial truths when he says "For we know in part and prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away", This "done away" should not mean that it is to be removed altogether—but rescued from its fragmentary character. And this was the work of Navavidhan—*to restore every creed and every doctrine to its proper place as a fragment of truth in a harmonious whole of Truth.* By rejecting the fragments, we cannot build up the whole.

JANUARY 13TH—*Unto Scientists.* Dr. B. C. Ghosh read the prayer (by Keshub) 'Unto Scientists' from *Sadhu Samagam* and dwelt on the relation beween Science and Religion and upon the scientific character of the teachings of Navavidhan.

JANUARY 20TH—Dr. B. C. Ghosh read the tenth chapter from the autobiography of the Maharshi, describing the stages by which the latter organised the order of divine service in the Brahmo Somaj. The Maharshi laid great stress on a *doctrine of response (sai-deo-a)*. Whatever found response in his heart, he accepted and whatever did not—he rejected. Thus in the Upanishads he accepted dualistic teachings carefully rejecting all monistic (adwaita) interpretation. Further the Upanishads found, an echo in his soul and he accepted them but the Vedas did not and he rejected them—specially after the Vedic scholars sent by him to Benares explained the contents of the Vedas to him. This doctrine of response, Dr. Ghosh pointed out, had a positive aspect and a negative aspect. When lesser members of the Brahmo Somaj, clung to the negative aspect (accepting nothing that they could not understand or prove) Maharshi fled from Calcutta to escape their rationalism, to the Simla hills. But when Keshub came and began unwittingly to lay emphasis on and practise the positive aspect, Maharshi's heart went out to him and he became the Maharshi's right hand. To both *Sadhan* was imperative in order to develop a response within our being to all truth and to all spirituality. Taking up the negative aspect of Maharshi's doctrine of response, the earlier Brahmos landed into rationalism; devoting himself to the positive culture Keshub advanced steadily to the stand point of the Navavidhan—to the Law of Active Participation in all religions in all spiritual experience.

JANUARY 24TH—*Children's Day.* A service was conducted in the morning by Dr. B. C. Ghosh and was attended by a large number of children and young people. Dr. Ghosh read minister's prayer on "Sahaj Matrirupa" and referred to the dawn of religious consciousness even in the young. The traditions of Dhruba and Prahlad, the accounts of the early boy life of Jesus and many other saints and great men—even in Keshub as a lad of twelve, point to the *kripa*, the grace of God on children. God reveals Himself to us ordinary people in many ways—not the same way in two people—and such revelation given in early life may not be fully recognised at the moment but comes to be realised eventually as a quiet act of grace. Moments of intense and holy emotion, of sublime emotion are of His raising and He raises them through agents of whom the mother is the most important. To realise them as divine agents, to see God in such agents, to see the Mother in the mother, is the beginning of *Bhakti-Yoga*. Such beginnings are not denied to any of us but we neglect and forget them and lose a great opportunity. As children we are to be taught that God is in everything and every agent and the object of life is like Dhruba to seek God in all things. God reveals Himself according to the need of each of us (*abhab bujhe dekha den*) as Keshub's prayer points out—and this message of hope and cheer is the greatest message that the grown ups can give to the young ones near and dear to them.

PROMOTHO LOLL LECTURES

*Chairman's Address**

At the first lecture Dr. B C. Ghosh commenced the proceedings by reading Minister Keshub's prayer on "The God of the Aryans" and introduced the lecturer after explaining the tradition and outlook of the Navavidhan with regard to the Scriptures and Religions of the world and dwelling upon the circumstances that led to the organisation of the memorial lectures. Years before the Navavidhan was proclaimed (1880) the Brahmo Somaj of India took up a liberal attitude towards all established religions under the lead of Acharya Keshub Chunder Sen. In his controversy with Christian Missionaries in 1862 Keshub asserted his right to accept God's truth wherever it was found and proclaimed all truth to be God's truth. Consistently with that attitude a comparative study of all religions was taken up in right earnest in the Brahmo Somaj— after the manner of Rajah Rammohun Roy and in 1865 a collection of passages from various scriptures was compiled and prescribed for reading during divine service.

This *Sloka Sangraha* led to widespread liberalism among the Brahmos. And Keshub Chunder Sen did not rest satisfied with a mere intellectually liberal attitude but proceeded to adopt and *rehabilitate* the *cultures*, the devotional practices of Hinduism and Christianity. *Kirtans* and Street *kirtans*, meditations and *yoga*, church organisations and institutions all began to be taken up in the course of a few years. And through this intellectual as well as devotional liberalism came the new light to him—the light of the Navavidhan—the light that the Holy Spirit was working in India and guiding him and his church into a New Dispensation. The first public announcement for this new gospel was made in January 1875 and at the same time came to be established several orders of *Sadhaks* who were to undertake the interpretation of various religions not only through intellectual views but by means of devotional practices. For instance Sadhu Aghore Nath became a student of Budhism and practised *Yoga* and *Samadhi* and he left his conviction that the only way to enter into deeper spiritual truths of Budhism was to revive the *jhanas* and *samadhis* undertaken by Budha himself. These *Sadhaks* have left the world and in the succeeding generation it was the sincere desire of many, among whom the late Bhai Promotho Loll was prominent that new *Sadhaks* should take up the work of interpretation and assimilation of the religions of the world. Promotho Loll himself went to Manchester College, Oxford and became an earnest student of Christianity and comparative Religion. He accepted as his ideal the life of Keshub Chunder Sen—who lived perpetually a "life of harmony"—and through readings and meditations and through his exquisite *upasana* practised the attainment of harmony and synthesis. The Navavidhan not only enjoins the seeking of harmony in all religions but insists on the acceptance of and participation in all truths. Friends of "Our Sangha" felt that a fitting honour to his memory could be done by courses of lectures on Comparative Religion and Theology. In 1914 after the Lucknow Sangha he had been instrumental inthe starting of a School of Theology that worked for three years. And these memorial lectures now will be a grateful tribute to the services that Promotho Loll rendered unto the Church. In asking the venerable Professor Dwija Das Datta to deliver the first course it was felt that he was the remaining link in the line of scholar-devotees in the Brahmo Somaj. Inspite of his advanced years Prof. Datta had kept up the study of Vedantic philosophy. His life of Sankara in Bengali was a standard book unfortunately not yet appreciated. And his works on the Veda and Koran were being published from Comilla. These lectures would give some idea as to the line of his thought and labors and inform people generally of the treasures of Vedic Hinduism and Koranic Islam.

---

* Sadhu Promotho Loll Lectures by Prof. Dwija Das Dutt, August & September 1931—Reprinted from Navavidhan, September 10 of 1931.

THE FAITH THAT ENDURES*

Thinkers of the Evolution School in the 19th century laid stress upon the hypothesis of *integration* and *differentiation* of Herbert Spencer, the primitive nebula that covered the whole world *differentiated* into segregated masses—which gave rise to heavenly bodies and these again *integrated* with new combination—the solar and starry systems. In nature everywhere we may discern the operation of these processes and we may discern them in *human affair* as well. In the evolution of human society, in the evolution of human thought and religious systems, we may note the working of *Emancipation,* (differenciation) and *Unification* or consolidation (integration).

In the history of the Brahmo Somaj—we may note that Rajah Rammohun Roy sought emancipation from idolatry and polytheism of Hindu Society and worked to establish a new unity of all the peoples in spiritual worship. Maharshi Devendra Nath also sought emancipation from the current interpretation and authority of the scriptures as well as from the growing influence of rationalism in the Brahmo Somaj. He longed for a unity and solidarity based on spiritual interpretation and spiritual culture. If we study the career of Keshub Chunder Sen—we are surprised to find that in seeking emancipation, he did not want to throw up the old—but to retain it and proceed to the new. In his case the emancipation did not mean emancipation from the false—but from the *partialness* of truth. So that he did not have to discard the old but recognising its *inadequacy* he proceeded to supplement it by the new. Emancipation thus became itself the process of unification in the single process of synthesis, there is nothing to regret in the world of truth—there is everything to retain and cherish and harmonise. Thus his new ideal—which he called the *Navavidhan*—in its cultivation evolves in life—the process of emancipation from the *partialness* of truth and the process of *consolidation* with all existing truth. The recent agitation in the town—in the political atmosphere—due to the conflict between the cry of "Independence" and that of "Dominion Status" need not disturb us in the light of Keshub's teaching. Conflict there need be none. Emancipation from foreign control must combine with consolidation within and without. Such consolidation itself will be a corrective to emancipation in the old sense of the term. In spiritual solidarity, we realise the true meaning of all our differences and all our earlier antagonisms. Mutual acceptance and mutual service and dependance so prominent in spiritual life must find their reflection and projection in every other sphere of our lives. It is the faith—the faith in the law of acceptance, the law of participation that we call the *Navavidhan*—is the faith that alone endures—is the faith that upholds us in all the storms and stresses of life.

---

*Reprinted from Navavidhan, Feb. 21 & 28 of 1921.

TO AN AMERICAN FRIEND ON HER BEREAVEMENT*

Dear friend,

You asked me yesterday if the departed can "see" us and "know what we are doing" at the moment; and if they can "communicate" with us. I gave you a hurried answer that I do believe that they see us and know what we are doing, and that they can influence us and even guide us. The considerations that help me in my belief may prove useful to you in your hour of sorrow, and so I take the liberty to place them before you.

It is usual to speak of the material world and the spiritual, but there is really only one world in which there is primarily an unseen assemblage of spirits, some of whom reach a stage where they know each other and communicate with one another through sensuous and material means. This stage we call the world of the living. Death —rather birth and death mark the limits of this stage. In the one world there does exist a bond *(yoga)*, a solidarity among all its inmates. In what we call the material world we are all aware of an economic solidarity, --of the mutual interdependence of one human being upon every other in regard to the goods of this world. The story of the plum pudding and the million upon million hands, living and non-living, that help to produce it, is familiar to most of us, I believe. This economic solidarity sustaining our life on this earth may be viewed as a foreglimpse of the spiritual solidarity, of the interdependence of all spirits, that obtains in the one world.

---

* Reprinted from Navavidhan, May 23, of 1929

The adult in his richer consciousness can partially see into the mind of the child, as well as see things that the child does not. The trained expert also sees many things that escape our common untutored observation. Similarly, one may hold that the richer consciousness of the departed can "see" things and know things that are shut out from our consciousness by reason of the limitations of the body.

That influences pass from one point of the material world to another, however remote, is well known in our day of the wireless. Among spirits, too, living or departed, influences pass of which sometimes we are conscious, at other times not. Strange thoughts, strange emotions, strange feelings, strange impulses that arise within us, now and again, are explained by many as intrusions of the unconscious or subconscious. But may not some of them at least be "suggestions" or influences coming from kindred spirits striving to guide us and lead us? I believe in the spiritual solidarity of the world and so it is easy for me to think that at least a Budha or a Jesus is not dead but lives and lives for the uplift of humanity,—for leading the weaker brethren on to the heights of spiritual communion.

It will not be difficult for many to agree with this view; but many will differ as to the way, as to the means, as to the medium that brings about and sustains this unity and solidarity. To me it is nothing less than the Being of God Himself. It is God alone Who is the medium of communication between spirit and spirit. It is God alone Who raises our consciousness from stage to stage. It is God alone through Whom, by Whom, in Whom, all the activities of spirits, living or departed, are sustained or guided. It is through God that you can draw near to me or I to you, living as we do now in the embodied world. Again, it is through God that you can draw nigh to your dear departed and I to mine. It is through Him again that the dear departed can draw nigh unto us across the shade that is called death.

Spirit communications in this life adopt material media as well as spiritual; but once divested of the body, spirits require spiritual media; the most familiar of which is Love. Love is also perhaps *the type* of spiritual media, so that if we can grow in love we grow more in the possibilities and capacities of communication with the spiritual or spirit world. And with love we undoubtedly grow more and more into the spiritual world. This will also explain why the great saints and seers of every age have insisted on our growth in love. I need hardly add that love gives us insight into the deepest things of this life as nothing else does.

Great teachers have also declared that God is Love. God, the Author of our Being, is also the Ground of our relations. The love that I bear to my mother is His, and the love that she gives me is also His. The world of spirits participates in His love, and in all His other powers. And if the law of spiritual interdependence and solidarity, and the law of spirit-communications are also His, what else can we do but seek His mercy and help whenever our heart longs for the dear departed? He is the Great Medium of communication here and hereafter. In prayer to God, therefore, as much as in the growth of love, is given us the surest way to the communion, we so long for.

Yours—
(B. C. G.)

THE GRAVEST DANGER*

The evening service at the Mandir on sunday, 2nd June last, was conducted by Dr. B. C. Ghosh, at 7 p.m. With the opening hymn "He who prevents fears and dangers—O my Soul etc.," (বিপদ ভয় বারণ যে করে ওরে মন—*Vipada bhaya barana je karey orey mana!*) came the cue for the prayers and the sermon. The Invocation reminded the worshipper of the dangers external and internal: the dreads that we feel about things without and within; and called attention to the worship of God as the best preventive of all fears and apprehensions in life. Then followed the appropriate hymn "Thou art O Hari the Merciful dispeller of danger! (তুমি বিপদ ভঞ্জন দয়াল হরি—*Toomi Vipad bhanjan doyal Hari*) and the congregation prepared to join in the *Aradhana* (Adoration). During the *aradhana* it came to be realised, *firstly*—that trials and dangers of life lose their strength and reality when we are face to face with the Real and Infinite Spirit, Who by His mysterious touch can change them into blessings, —*secondly*—that He, the Eternal and Infinite has never forsaken me but has given me being and shelter along with the rest of the world, *thirdly*—that He the One-without-a-second includes me a vile sinner in all His thoughts for the world and in His gravest scheme for the salvation of the world—that He by giving His Navavidhan unto us has demonstrated His great love and care for me as every religion and every truth that He sent unto the world was for *me* and *my* redemption, *fourthly*—that in His Navavidhan He has given assurance of the solution of all mysteries of life and death the moment I win and attain for myself the "Frame Divine" the *Bhagabati Tanoo,* and *fifthly*—that the greatest blessing that He will give us is neither peace nor happiness but the "priceless treasure" *(atul sampatti)* of *a life moulded by His own hands,* and the witness of His promise consists in the fact that we are already enjoying the gift of such lives in our own homes, in our own Communion and in the larger communion of the prophets and saints of the world.

---

* Reprinted from Navavidhan, June 6 of 1929.

Next came the chant of the common prayer which was followed by the general prayer acknowledging great blessings to the worshipper and to the communion, offering thanks for the removal of fears and the resolution of trials and dangers through the advent of the Navavidhan and beseeching the Merciful Lord for the "priceless treasure"—the life moulded by His own hands for every man and woman.

The very appropriate hymn অনেক দিয়েছ নাথ (*anek diyechha Nath!*)—Much hast Thou given us, O Lord!—sung by the congregation with great feeling lifted up our hearts and turned us all to the fervent prayer for "the life in Thee" as the great protection against all trials and dangers.

The worshippers then joined in Keshub's

prayer for the "Fullness of faith" (পূর্ণ বিশ্বাস—*purna viswas*) which made them realise that the greatest, the gravest danger to be averted in life was want of faith!

The sermon proceeded to analyse this fulness of faith into three factors—faith in God, faith in the Navavidhan and faith in the congregation of the saints and prophets and in the dedicated lives of the Apostles and *Sadhaks* of the communion of the Navavidhan in particular.

A suitable prayer for the life of full faith prompted the hymn that followed to supplicate an entry into the life of the Navavidhan (কবে নববিধানে পাব আধিকার—*kabey Navaaidhaney pabo adhikar* :—when shall I get the right to enter the Navavidhan!)

Faith in God is tested by our dependence on Him. True faith in God relies on Him for everything in life—for our daily bread, for the welfare of our near and dear ones as well as for the welfare of the city and the state and the race. In the *Nava Vidhan* drama, one of the characters Hari Sukh points out that anxiety and cares of the world are also due to want of faith.

DEEP EXPERIENCES AND SIMPLE DISCIPLINE IN THE NAVAVIDHAN*

On Sunday the 16th June last, Dr. B. C. Ghosh conducted the service in the Brahma Mandir. The opening hymn called upon the worshipper to take the name of *Dayamoy* the Merciful in all coditions of life and in the company of nature animate and inanimate (দয়াময় নাম বল বদনে—*Dayamoy Nam bolo oadane*) the Invocation reminded us of the witness of the heavens and the earth, the witness of History and the human mind—and the witness of God Himself Who is ever ready to reveal Himself—for does He not in the Navavidhan remind us of His eternal care for the sinner in every age and every clime?

The *Aradhona* recalled the mercies of God and His solicitude for sinners. In His Mercy God makes this world, this life and everything therein real and full of revelation. In His infinity He has assured us of His eternal care. In the Navavidhan He has revealed the depth and power of His Love as well as the unity of His dispensations. He is not going to leave any miserable sinner alone—but entrap him in His Love and commandeer all the co-operation of the spirit-world to help him to work out his own life as a *new man of the New Dispensation*.

---

* Reprinted from Navavidhan, June 20 of 1921.

The common prayer led to the supplication that the sinful worshipper himself was the unreality, was the darkness, was the lifelessness, from which his fellow worshippers and fellow beings are to be rescued—and that it was he, the sinful worshipper, who needed to be made real, made luminous and full of life.

After a hymn the congregation joined in Keshub's prayer that we all needed to be instructed further in the Navavidhan—for all the experiences in the Navavidhan *were deep*. Its *yoga* was deep; its love and *Bhakti* were deep: its philosophy was deep: its dedicated life was deep.

The sermon stated and discussed the antinomy in the Navavidhan—deep experiences on the one hand and simple easy *Sadhan* (culture) on the other. The simplicity of *Sadhan* lay in the synthesis of *Sadhans*, that were already well known and time honored. *Yoga* by itself was arduous; but combined with *Bhakti* it became easy. *Bhakti* by itself was difficult: but combined with *yoga* and *Karma* it came quite easily. Combine *Yoga, Bhakti, Karma, Jnan*—continue contemplation, devotion, works and faith—and the new *Sadhan synthetic* becomes easy. In Hindu thought three stages of outlook in life were mentioned—(1)—the *adhi voutik* (আধি ভৌতিক) or material natural and sensuous, (2)—the *adhi-daivik* (আধি দৈবিক) or supernatural and supersensuous and (3)—the *adhi-atmic* (আধি আত্মিক বা আধ্যাত্মিক) or spiritual. Our insight into the world progresses from the sensuous to the spiritual and thus our experiences deepen. But if as we pass on from stage to stage we do not give up the earlier stage altogether our experiences undergo a wonderful change. They certainly become much deeper and more novel. The Navavidhan seeks Synthesis of the three perceptions and so succeeds in gaining a much deeper insight. Its *Samanvaya* or Synthesis of disciplines and exercises, its adoption and combination of existing cultures in the positive religions of the world, enables it to solve and transcend the antinomy of depth of experience and simplicity of *Sadhan*.

The concluding hymn exorted the worshipper to keep Hari in the forefront of whatever he did and thought and searched.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION*

[The third of a course of lectures, held on 4th July, 1929, dealt with "The religious and philosophical implications of Physics of the Past and Present," was presided over by Dr. B. C. Ghosh. After giving a resume of the two previous lectures, the lecturer Dr B. Dasannachariya, M.A., Ph.D. (Munich) proceeded to discuss the *limitations* of science, and by implication, the limitations of the human mind. The ideas he introduced were concerned with the nature of *Time* and *Space*, *Matter* and *Energy*. Discussions of these topics led to the confusions of metaphysics. The doctrine of Relativity, the Quantum theory and reflections on dimensional *space* and on *time* as the fourth dimension, were briefly considered and the trend of the Physics of the Future indicated. The lecturer very modestly referred to the difficulty of giving a popular summary of these highly mathematical theories of the present day. He also hoped that the limitations he spoke of might disappear if the human mind became different.]

The chairman then congratulated the lecturer on the manner in which he had dealt with the subjects. If the art of exposition consisted in representing the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar, the lecturer had succeeded well in the art as at least every teacher of physics present would testify. He also thanked the lecturer in helping to realise on these evenings, how the exercise of communion with men of science—might be carried out in the church. That exercise was veritably a new research—a seeking anew of the inspiration that comes to the man of science and works upon his mind and spirit and character. And the Navavidhan church welcomes and appreciates every occasion that gives an opportunity for such a communion.

---

* Reprinted from the Navavidhan, July 17 & 24 of 1930.

As regards the problems enunciated that evening by the lecturer, the chairman held the fundamental position that spirit alone could explain Matter and so matter had to be understood in terms of spirit. The world of matter and energy was best understood as the perpetual activity of God on other spirits and that Time was a mode of working of the Grace of God and space a manner of appreciating our dependence on God, of realising that He was our Eternal Shelter and Rest. In the ancient philosophy of our land Matter was understood as *that which is conditioned by Time, Space and Causality* while spirit could not be so conditioned. Things spiritual—such as knowledge, wisdom, love, righteousness—all cease to be what they are when we *limit* them by time, space and causality. The transition, in Physics, from the static view of matter to a dynamic view was a movement in the right direction—it was a step towards taking a spiritual view of the universe. There were no limitations to spirit—as Budha realised, it is said, in his fourth *jhana* that he was limitless infinite consciousness – *Buddham jnanam anantanm akasa Vipulam Samam!* And so the chairman would say that the *limitations* that the lecturer referred to were the limitations of human *concepts* and the failure to express concepts (such as a differential equation) in terms of percepts. The remedy lay in rising to the height of realisation of those concepts and in transcending fixed and rigid concepts and in lifting ourselves to the spiritual plane.

The chairman then referred to another trend in modern thought. The biologist had shown that the living body was a colony of detached cells. The physicist had held for a long time that matter was a system of discreet particles and was now looking upon energy as a collection as it were of "quanta." Also now the psychologist was analysing human personality into a system of monadic personalities. So the whole range of science is face to face once again with the old problem of *Individuality* and the old antithesis of individuality and the absolute! The next movement of science, he suspected, would be towards building up new views of matter as a "Continuum," Time and Space as continua, energy once again as an expanse of quanta. These oscillations would go on ad infinitum, unless we gained the insight that in the spirit world the individual was in the absolute and the absolute was in the individual! That, in short, in the language of *yoga:* they were one! Such an insight comes to the *yogi,* to the mystic and to any one who lives the spirit life, the life eternal and realises within and without, the unceasing operation of the grace of the Spirit. Lastly in referring to the hope hazarded by the lecturer that limitations might be overcome by a transformation of human mind and human nature, the chairman pointed that the position of Idealism had always been that "being is knowing" which might be restated as "being is knowing and attaining." The mysteries of spirit life stand revealed as we pursue the spiritual and as we transform the material into the spiritual. It is held in the Navavidhan brotherhood, for instance, that the mystery of death is solved only to him and by him who leading the life spiritual stands transfigured with a body of flesh and blood with a mind of instincts and passions, completely under control of his spirit.

MELLOW OUR HEARTS !*

In one of our hymns there occurs the line *Ma name pashan heeya golay* a stony heart melts at the name of Mother. If no other name of God; if no other thought of God softens our hearts and makes us impressed with things spiritual, the thought that God is our loving mother, the Mother of our mothers, will turn our hearts from the world to Him. Hearts hardened by worldliness, by sin and disobedience do soften when they realise that God as our Mother always looks after and takes care of refractory and wayward children. Such hearts mellow when they do realise that wherever we be, in whatever sphere of life, in this world or the next, we are always safe in the arms of the Mother.

Such was the thought and the experience suggested by the lines of the hymn in our usual attitude and frame of mind. But on the Magh-otsav morning of January 1929, at the close and climax of the *aradhona* Bhai Promotho Loll, in an inspired moment no doubt, spoke out the lines we have quoted and translated below. It was without doubt one of his deepest experiences and a believer in the Navavidhan cannot but feel grateful for such a confirmation from such a source.

Not only worldliness, not only sinful and vicious ways of the flesh and of the mind make us impervious to spiritual influences. But *partialness* in our spiritual attitude, narrowness of faith, onesided addiction to particular disciplines—nay, *specialisation in spiritual culture or sadhan* leads to rigidity of thought and circumscription of emotion and activity. It is this spiritual fact that explains the intolerance of many deeply religious and pious natures. It explains the stagnation that often comes to us in our life and the *shooskota* (dryness) the indifference that overtakes us every now and then. It is this 'partialness' (*anshik bhab*) as Keshub described it, that is an impediment to real and continued spiritual progress. The discernment that one must eschew partialness and practise, synthesis (*Samanvay*) and grow in an all-round spiritual culture, belongs to the "New Man of the New Dispensation." He who grows thus understands the Navavidhan and becomes a new man of Navavidhan.

---

* Reprinted from the Navavidhan, July, 17 & 24 of 1930.

So Promotho Loll prayed to be delivered from partial cultures that leave our hearts hardened. And he went deeper. He realised that the deepest ideal of the relation of man to his God is that of the mother. In Motherhood of God we can express our deepest contact with and utter dependence on the Supreme Spirit. Are we not entirely dependent on God for our life and sustenance as much as we are on our earthly mother before we are born—and much more—ever so much more? Are we not cared for and looked after wherever we are and howsoever we behave, by our Eternal Mother?

Is she not our Eternal Home? Not *my* Home, but *our* Home! Live, move and have our being as we do in the Supreme Mother--human spirits are all members of One Home: brothers and sisters in the deepest sense. The realisation of the Motherhood therefore brings with it inevitably the brotherhood of man with the sense that *we are partakers of the love and the bounties of God* which none may forfeit, of which none may be deprived. Every religion of the world is God's Dispensation and God's blessing, meant not only for others but for *me*. With such an insight comes the perception that the Law of Acceptance is the great spiritual law in the world—Acceptance of every scripture of every faith, of every apostle saint and prophet wherever and whenever born.

When the Name of the Mother conveys all this to the soul as in a flash, the hardened heart of particulars softens: the greeting of the Mother mellows the soul and melts the heart and the untold power and wealth and joy of the spirit world works upon the spirit and raises it up in a wonderful transfiguration.

Mellow Our Stony Hearts

Eto din jantam na je, jey soodhoo Jnan sadhan kore, tar pashan hridoy Agay jantam na je, je soodhoo Karma Sadhan kare, tar pashan hridoy Agay jantam na je, je soodhoo Yoga sadhan kare, taro pashan hridoy. Agay jantam na je, je soodhoo Bhakti sadhan kare, taro pashan hridoy Ei sob pashan hridoy golay Ma, Tomar sneher sparsay. Takhan tara parasparke grahan kare Takhani to, Janani, Navavidhaner nootan manoosh hai. Ma name Jnan, Karma, Bhakti, Yog sab Eke hoy Tai to Navavidhane Ma namer eto adar; Ma name je pashan heeya golay!

"I did not know so long that, he who devotes himself to *Jnan* (learning) alone, has a stony heart. I did not know before that, he who devotes himself to *karma* (works) alone, has a stony heart. I did not know before, that he who devotes himself to *yoga* (communion) alone, has also a stony heart. I did not know before, that he who cultivates *bhakti* (Love) alone—even he has a stony heart. All these hard hearts soften at Thy loving touch O Mother, Then they begin to accept each other. It is then, O Mother, that the New Man of the New Dispensation is born. In the name of the Mother. *jnan*, *karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga* all inhere together. It is for this reason that we love the name Ma (Mother) so much in the Navavidhan: Mother's name, does indeed melt stony hearts."

Blessed be Thy Name O Mother! Blessed be this testimony of Thy son and servant Promotho Loll Sen. From partialness to partialness we walk our way with stony hearts. Lead thou in thy Great Love, to the fulness of the New Life of Acceptance. Accept us we pray Thee and make us accept Thee and accept each other. Harden not our hearts but soften them with faith and works, with love and wisdom, with charity and communion.

A MODERN SAINT*

Keshub prayed in 1882 for "one or two" spiritual sons—worthy children of the New Dispensation in whom all the teachings and messages of the Navavidhan would live concentrated. Keshub's prayer was answered. In Promotho Loll Sen, lad of fifteen and a nephew of his own, such a spiritual filiation worked to fulfilment and fruition. In his youth a deep student of literature and philosophy, a writer of no mean ability, a worker and organiser of earnestness and industry and above all an aspiring soul of piety and devotion—Promotho Loll Sen grew in the spirit; grew in the spirit of the Navavidhan to become a profound thinker, a reverent minister, an accepted leader and a unique spiritual personality. Years ago Unitarian friends in England who had the privilege of knowing him while he was a student at Manchester College, Oxford, spoke of him as *Saintly Sen* and Drs. Drummond and Carpenter were strongly impressed by his deeply spiritual nature. He was only thirty then and had not begun his regular ministry. Although he lived an apostolic life from his early youth and devoted himself to the work of the church from boyhood almost, it was characteristic of him that he did not take the Apostolic vow or ordination till he was forty. From that moment in January 1907 onwards the history of the Navavidhan Mandali is closely woven up with his ministry and gradually emerging leadership. Pastoral work of the church at Calcutta became his monopoly as it were and his services at *utsavas* and festive occasions drew large gatherings. A very rapid speaker, his style gained more and more in simplicity and impressiveness and the spontaneity of thought and expression—an expression perfectly free from gestures and mannerisms and emotional outbursts—touched the heart of many and convinced all that he drank deep at the fonts of spiritual life. At first his character and his example worked like leaven but as his personality as teacher and minister took shape men and women drew towards him. They loved and longed to work with him and work for him. In his role of peace-maker in the community he found himself called upon to take upon himself many burdens—educational, journalistic and administrative that he would have gladly given up to other shoulders. And these burdens were lightened by the men and women inspired by his spirituality and moved by his affection.

---

*Reprinted from Navavidhan, July 10 of 1930.

A modern saint, Promotho Loll Sen loved to dwell in the heart of a city. True, in the last few years he loved also to retire now and then to the Himalayas for communion and contemplation. But he was happy in Calcutta with all its dust and mist and want of sanitation. It was because he loved the company of his fellow workers there and rejoiced in the opportunities that he found there as a fisher of men. Fond of worship, he came to prefer public worship to private devotion. Holding prayers with small groups of ardent men and women or celebrating congregational *utsavs* or taking part in festive ceremonies he regarded every incident in domestic or communal life as *an opportunity for rejoicing in the spirit (utsav suyog).* He loved to call together a few friends at the least opportunity to join in prayers and *kirtans.* But he was not altogether content with small gatherings for devotion. He valued large gatherings congregations, conferences, councils, parliaments—not that he wanted to address them—but because they brought opportunities of worshipping together and communing together and of giving impetus to the work and workers of the church.

For forty years in thought and deed he bore aloft the flag of the church and in this year of its jubilee, a few months after he had lifted it high up to float in the breeze of a glorious winter morning in Calcutta, the Divine Mother called on him to glorify it in his death. In death as in life may he live among us to the glory of God and to the glory of His Church!

PRINTED BY P. GHOSE,
AT THE NAVAVIDHAN PRESS ;
NO. 3, RAMANATH MAZUMDAR STREET, CALCUTTA.